The lament of the Virgin Mary from Romanos the Melode to George of Nicodemia.

Tsironis, Niki J

THE LAMENT OF THE VIRGIN MARY FROM ROMANOS THE MELODE TO GEORGE OF NICOMEDIA:

AN ASPECT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARIAN CULT

by

Niki J. Tsironis

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Department of Byzantine
and Modern Greek Studies
King's College London
London WC2R 2LS

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Who walked between the violet and the violet
Who walked between
The various ranks of varied green
Going in white and blue, in Mary's colour,
Talking of trivial things
In ignorance and in knowledge of eternal dolour...

T.S.Eliot, *Ash-Wednesday, 1930*

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the lament of the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross from the fifth to the ninth centuries. The Marian lament is studied with reference to the growing cult of the Mother of God during the early and middle Byzantine period. For the purpose of the present study I focused on literary texts with special attention to the genre of homiletics, an invaluable source for the study of the Byzantine thoughtworld that has only recently begun to be explored.

The development of the cult of the Mother of God has always been linked to Christology. In the fifth century, at the time of the Nestorian controversy, Mary became a focal point for the definition of the way in which humanity and divinity co-existed in Christ. Similarly, at the time of the Iconoclastic controversy, Mary became instrumental to the understanding of incarnational theology on the basis of which the veneration of icons was defended by the Iconophiles. The importance of Mary in Iconoclasm is testified by the substantial corpus of homilies and hymns composed in her honour during the eighth and ninth centuries. Accordingly, the veneration of the Mother of God was propounded by the Iconophile writers of the period as a synonym of the cult of icons. The reason for this association was the crucial role of Mary in the circumscription of the Word that could thus be depicted in matter sanctified at the time of its assumption by Christ.

Along with the cult of Mary, Iconophile writers drew increasing attention to the Passion of the Lord as the moment in which his full humanity was exemplified. The lament of the Virgin came to link the cult of Mary with the Passion of the Lord. The *kontakion* of Romanos the Melode was the first instance when these two themes were combined. After a break of almost two centuries the lament of the Virgin is encountered in the Iconoclastic period, while the ninth century witnessed the apogee of this literary theme that was subsequently incorporated in the liturgical books of the Church and was used as a model by iconographers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Journals in the text are cited in italics; all series in plain.

AB =*Analecta Bollandiana*, Brussels

ACO =*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum,* E. Schwartz (ed.), Argentorati-Berolini-Lipsiae

B =*Byzantion, Révue Internationale.des Études Byzantines,* Brussels

BBTT =Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, Queen's University, Belfast

BMGS =*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*

BS/EB =*Byzantine Studies/Études Byzantines*

BSGR =*Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana,* Teubner, Stuttgart

ByzFor =*Byzantinische Forschungen,* Amsterdam

ByzSlav =*Byzantinoslavica, Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines,* Prague

Contra Imaginum

= *Contra Imaginum Calumniatores Orationes Tres* (see John of Damascus in Bibliography)

CFHB =*Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae,* Bonn

CPT =*Cambridge Patristic Texts*, Cambridge 1899-

CQ =*Classical Quarterly*

CSCO =*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium,* Louvain, 1903-

DOP =*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*

DThC =*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique,* Paris

Dsp =*Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*

ECR =*Eastern Churches Review*

EHR =*English Historical Review*

EEBS = *Ἐπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, Athens

EO =*Echos d'Orient*

GCS =*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte,* Leipzig, 1897-

GrOrthThR =*Greek Orthodox Theological Review,* Holy Cross Orthodox Press

HThR =*Harvard Theological Review*

JEA =*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*

JEChSt=*Journal of Early Christian Studies,* The John Hopkins University Press

JRS =*Journal of Roman Studies*

JThS =*Journal of Theological Studies*

LT =*The Lenten Triodion*

Mansi = Mansi J.D., *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*

MThHE =*Μεγάλη Ἠθικη καὶ Θρησκευτικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία,* Athens

OCA =*Orientalia Christiana Analecta,* Rome

ODB =*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium,* A.P. Kazhdan (ed.), 3 vols., New York, Oxford, 1991

PBR =*Patristic and Byzantine Review*, New York

PG =Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*

PGL =*A Patristic Greek Lexicon,* (see Lampe in bibliography)

PL =Migne, *Patrologia Latina*

PO =*Patrologia Orientalis*

REB =*Revue des Études Byzantines,* Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, Paris

ROC =*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*

RSR =*Revue des Sciences Réligieuses,* Paris

SC =*Sources Chrétiennes*, H. De Lubac, J. Daniélou (eds.), Paris 1941-

SubsHag =*Subsidia Hagiographica,* Brussels

SPBS =*Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies*

TM =*Travaux et Mémoires,* Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation Byzantines, CNRS, Paris

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is the lament of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross in Byzantine literature from the fifth to the ninth centuries. The Marian lament is a theme that in itself is absent from the New Testament while the presence of Mary at the foot of the Cross is attested only in the Johannine Gospel (19:25-27). The lament of the Virgin has been studied in a brief article by Margaret Alexiou who also referred to the same topic in her book about the ritual lament.[1] Alexiou's studies, however invaluable, do not relate the development of the lament to the development of the cult of the Virgin Mary which passed through several stages during the early and middle Byzantine period. The present thesis aims to study the lament of the Virgin in connexion with the development of her cult and to examine possible associations between the Marian cult and contemporary Byzantine theology.

Any researcher attempting an examination of the cult of the Virgin inevitably faces methodological problems that have preoccupied many researchers to the present day.[2] The Catholic scholar René Laurentin, who has dedicated most of his work to the study of the Mother of God has also considered the methodological issues involved in the study of Mary in connexion with

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[1] M. Alexiou, "The Lament of the Virgin in Byzantine Literature and Modern Greek Folk Song," *BMGS* 1, 1975, 111-140; *eadem*, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, Cambridge, 1974.

[2] See for example René Laurentin, "Un problème initial de méthodologie mariale," H.Du Manoir (ed.), *Maria*, vol. 1, Paris, 1949, 697-706 and esp. 703-4.

subjects (such as the Immaculate Conception -the supreme issue in Roman Catholic Mariology-, the *Avis Salutaires* of the seventeenth century, or the issue of the co-redemption and intercession of Mary) that have interested scholars and theologians alike from the Middle Ages till now. Laurentin distinguishes two approaches: the critical or scientific and the mystical.[3] The methodological issues involved in the study of Mary are due to the few references to the Mother of God in the New Testament and to the subsequent lack of any substantial doctrinal formulations by the oecumenical councils of the Church, with the sole exception of the Third Oecumenical Council (431). Theologians have therefore confined themselves to the material offered by the Fathers, who drew upon both the Synoptic Gospels, the apocryphal literature, and Church tradition. I believe that Vladimir Lossky is the only one who has asserted in so many words that devotion to the Virgin Mary as a tradition of the Church, sanctioned by centuries of religious practice, should be considered as prestigious as the 'dogma' itself.[4] Lossky considers that dogma and devotion are inseparably linked in the consciousness of the Church and he adds that "dogma should throw light on devotion, bringing it into contact with the fundamental truths of our faith;

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[3] R. Laurentin, *Court traité sur la Vierge Marie,* Paris, 1968; E.L. Mascall, "The Dogmatic Theology of the Mother of God," in *idem* (ed.), *The Mother of God (a Symposium),* London 1949, 37-50 and esp. 37-8 where Mascall shows his awareness of the complexity of the study of the Virgin and makes a notable effort to define his point of departure and the perspective from which he tackles the issue. The question of methodology is also discussed by many other scholars, such as V.Lossky and G.Florovsky.

[4] V. Lossky, 'Panagia' in J.H. Ericson and T.E. Bird (eds.), *In the Image and Likeness of God,* Crestwood NewYork, 1985, 195-210 and esp. 196.

whereas devotion should enrich dogma with the Church's living experience".[5] In the present study I hope to prove that the lament and the cult of the Mother of God are indeed linked to the theological preoccupations of particular periods of Byzantine history and that this link fully justifies Lossky's position.

Before entering directly into the subjects treated in each chapter of this thesis it is desirable to divert briefly to consider the issue of continuity between the cult of goddesses in antiquity and the cult of the Mother of God. Both the lament and the cult of the Virgin Mary have been the subject of studies that attempt to demonstrate the continuity between the ancient Greek and the Byzantine tradition.[6] The cult of the Mother of God has been studied from perspectives that differ a great deal from one another and which in most cases fail to establish a link between the historical and the theological currents that influenced the development of the cult of Mary. Some researchers have focused on the female goddesses of antiquity,[7] while others have adopted a psychoanalytic

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[5] The same point of view is adopted by P. Nellas in the introduction to the edition of the Marian homilies of Nicholas Cabasilas and by A.Yeftits in the introduction to the edition of the Marian homilies of John of Damascus; see respectively, Nicholas Cabasilas, *Ἡ Θεομήτωρ,* P.Nellas (ed.), Athens 1989; John of Damascus, *Ἡ Θεοτόκος* A.Yeftits (ed.), Athens, 1970.

[6] Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament*; G. Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature,* London, 1992.

[7] V. Limberis, *Divine Heiress, The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople,* London and New York, 1994. Limberis borrows her main idea (namely the notion of the Theotokos as a new Pallas Athena) from the article by Averil Cameron on "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: A City Finds its Symbol," *JThS* XXIX, 1978, 79-108. However, it has to be emphasized that the two authors argue from opposite ends as Limberis stresses the continuity between the cult of pagan goddesses

approach.[8] Neither of the two approaches seems to me particularly fruitful in that they both use methodologies that have been successfully employed in other disciplines or with reference to other subjects but fail to provide an explanation that does not simplify beyond recognition the historically interesting features of the development of the cult of Mary. A balanced view is offered by Hans Belting who, on the basis of art-historical evidence, points to the continuity of functions ascribed to supernatural beings and, consequently, to their artistic representations: "It is therefore not a question of Artemis becoming Mary or of Asclepius becoming Demetrius but of which traditional functions the new Christian images assumed...This means that general ideas and practices deeply rooted in human nature became established in Christianity as soon as it had ceased being on the defensive and had become the religion of the whole empire."[9]

The association of the Mother of God with the female deities of antiquity is a subject that should be dealt with in its own right. For the purpose of the present study the figure of the Magna Mater, the archetypal female goddess whose cult was prominent in late antiquity, especially in the geographical area of

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and that of the Virgin whereas Averil Cameron clearly opposes such a notion. In her article Cameron emphasizes the symbolic function of the Virgin in sixth-century Constantinople and the parallel that could be drawn between the role of Athena Pallada in Athens and that of the Virgin in Constantinople, but she does not make any derivative claim.

[8] M. Carroll, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary. Psychological Origins,* New Jersey, 1986.

[9] H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image Before the Era of Art,* transl. by E. Jephcott, Chicago and London, 1978, 40.

Asia Minor, should be touched on here.[10] The term 'Magna Mater' designates the diverse female deities of antiquity who were not confined solely to the Eastern Roman Empire; the names associated with the cult of the Great Mother are beyond number.[11] Among the various names of Isis we encounter those of the 'divine mother' or the 'mother of the gods'.[12] The depiction of Isis with her child is considered to be the "very type of the Mother and Child across the ages".[13] However, this image of motherhood relates to food and growth.[14] Studies of the other female deities of antiquity also show that their outstanding shared characteristic *par excellence* is their relevance to fertility, procreation, growth

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[10] See for example the answer Isidore of Pelusium (d.c. 435) gave to a letter by Theologius Scholasticus in which Isidore was asked to discuss the relationship between the Christian Mother of God and the pagan Mother of the Gods. Text in PG 78, cols. 216-217.

[11] Even if one distinguishes Isis from Rhea, Cotys or Cybele, the basic characteristics of the respective cults remain the same. Limberis, *Divine Heiress,* 130-134 treats them separately, but cf. J. Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire,* London, 1970, 16-20; R.S. Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions among Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Graeco-Roman World,* Oxford, 1992.

[12] The designation 'Great Mother' was given also to Cybele who was venerated in Phrygia and to Diana of Ephesus whose cult reached its peak in the third century A.D. See R.Fleischer, *Artemis von Ephesos und verwandte Kultstatuen aus Anatolien und Syrien,* Leiden, 1973.

[13] According to P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity, AD 150-750,* London, 1971, 142-143, the type of the Virgin Mary with the Child, "the most tender scene in medieval art", is a Coptic adaptation of the iconographical type of Isis with Horus. See also Belting, *Likeness and Presence,* 41 where the author asserts that "the icon of the Virgin is a striking example of the continuity in the use of images between pre-Christian and Christian times..." and 58, *n.*34 and fig. 7.

and nourishment as well as to the protection of cities and villages.[15] However striking the similarities that led scholars to the comparative study of the cult of female deities to the cult of the Mother of God there are important differences that in my view do not favour a syncretistic approach. The common elements encountered in the cult of the deities and of the Virgin refer to archetypal needs of people; their occurrence does not prove at all the dependence of the cult of the Virgin Mary on that of female deities of antiquity.

Several scholars have studied the lament with reference to its Graeco-Roman origins. The rhetorical antecedents of the Byzantine lament of the Mother of God are emphasized in the study by Holst-Warhaft.[16] The latter explores the specific relationship between the lament and women throughout ancient and medieval history. Warhaft considers lament as an exclusively feminine domain and suggests that the formal *epitaphios logos* was introduced by men in an effort to appropriate this formerly inaccessible field. In contrast with the Hellenistic background of the cult of Mary and of the development of the lament, little attention has been paid to the Jewish background that forms an integral part of the literary Marian lament.

Tackling the issue of the Christianisation of the empire with specific reference to the lament, de Martino has suggested that the introduction of the

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[14] The reference to fertility is prominent in the ancient Greek lamentations of Demeter discussed by Limberis, *Divine Heiress,* 61-62.

[15] Cf. Isidore of Pelusium (*op.cit.*, cols. 216-217) who argued that the Virgin Mary differed from the female goddesses because she was the only virgin-mother whose offspring came out of a human pregnancy.

[16] Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature, passim.*

lament of the Mother of God was the result of a conscious effort by the first Christian writers to eradicate pagan lament.[17] This view was rejected by Alexiou who used the evidence provided in Greek sources and drew attention to the Jewish background of the lament.[18] Biblical laments such as the laments of Abraham and Sarah for Isaac or the lament of Jephthah's daughter inspired in part both the learned and the vernacular tradition.[19] In the case of the daughter of Jephthah, the subject of virginity plays a key role in the *pathos* of the story, albeit from a different point of view than in the laments of the Theotokos. The unnamed maiden had to be offered as a sacrifice to God in consequence of the vow her father had made, if the latter were to help him defeat his enemies, the sons of Ammon. The young girl submits, but asks her father one favour: to let her lament her virginity with her friends at the mountains of Mizpeh.[20] In this text we see,

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[17] E. de Martino, *Morte e pianto rituale nel mondo antico. Dal lamento pagano al pianto di Maria,* Turin, 1958, 334-344.

[18] Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament* ; Alexiou, "The Lament of the Virgin" 111-140, and esp. 112.

[19] The lament of Abraham and Sarah is not to be found in the biblical account of the sacrifice (Gen. 22:16); the lament was inspired by the narrative and was elaborated by Byzantine authors. H.-G. Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur,* Munich, 1971, 189-90; Alexiou draws attention to the infiltration of popular elements into religious tradition and so argues in favour of a dynamic relationship between the learned and vernacular literature in Byzantium; see, Alexiou, "The Lament of the Virgin," 112.; M. Alexiou and P. Dronke, "The Lament of Jephtha's daughter: Themes, Traditions, Originality," *Studi Medievali* XII, 1971, 819-863. For the iconography of the subject see, K. Weitzmann, "The Jephthah Panel in the Bema of the Church of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai," *Studies in the Arts at Sinai, Essays by Kurt Weitzmann,* Princeton, New Jersey, 1982, 63-81.

[20] Judges 11:34-40.

first, that the lament is a function of the community: the maiden does not go to lament on her own, but with her companions;[21] second, virginity becomes the core of the lament;[22] and third, her sacrifice gives rise to an annual commemoration by the virgins of Israel that lasts for four days.[23]

The *threnos* of the Virgin in literature is not the same as in art where it refers to the lament of the Theotokos over the dead body of Christ after the Deposition from the Cross. In most cases literary laments are linked to the passage in the Gospel of John (19:25-27) which concerns the Virgin at the foot of the Cross. However, as we shall see, there are also examples of literary laments whose setting is placed before or after the Crucifixion.[24] In the Johannine

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[21] Judges 11:37: *ἐγώ εἰμι καὶ αἱ συνεταιρίδες μου* ; also a group of women laments Jesus on his way to Golgotha, Luke: 27-28.

[22] Judges 11:38: "and she went with her companions and she bewailed her virginity upon the mountains."

[23] Judges 11:39-40: "And it was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year."

[24] One of the rare instances in which the lament of the Virgin is introduced in a different context is the homily on the Presentation of Christ in the Temple by George of Nicomedia in the ninth century. There, the Mother of God laments as she hears the prophecy of Symeon about the sword that will pierce her heart. For the prophecy, see Luke 2:35; text: *Homilia in Occursum Domini,* (BHGa 1968 - cf. BHG 1967), CPG, vol. II, No. 2271=PG 28, cols. 973-1000. The text, initially published in the corpus of Pseuso-Athanasian homilies, is attributed to George of Nicomedia by H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich,* Munich, 1959, 543 and by H.Maguire, "The Iconography of Symeon with the Christ Child in Byzantine Art," *DOP* 34-35, 1980-1981, 261-269; *idem, Art and Eloquence in Byzantium,* Princeton, 1981, 98 with reference to art-historical evidence. Artistic representation of the *Threnos*, as well as of related themes such as the Virgin of the Passion and the Passion Cycles, appeared after the end of Iconoclasm, in the tenth and eleventh centuries. See for example R.

reference to the Virgin at Golgotha, Mary is not portrayed as lamenting. The theme of the tears of Mary derives from apocryphal literature and is first encountered in Syriac hymnography of the early Byzantine period. Its development has to be credited to the imaginative and poetic writers of Byzantium and is linked to the cult of the Theotokos itself.

The first chapter examines the laments of the Old Testament in an attempt to identify the Jewish background of the Marian lament. The same chapter examines the development of the Marian cult during the early Christian centuries. Special attention is drawn to what could be termed as the 'age of typology', i.e. the time during which early Christian writers devoted great efforts to the establishment of continuity between the Old and the New Covenant, i.e. between the Jewish background of the Old Testament and the persons and events of the Christian era. The place of Mary in the Gospels and the earliest surviving literary account of the Passion of the Lord by Melito of Sardis, with special references to constituents of the lament, are dealt with in the second part of the chapter.

As the present study hopes to show, the lament of the Virgin coincided chronologically with turning points in the cult of the Theotokos in Byzantium, such as the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Iconoclastic and post-Iconoclastic period. The second chapter deals with the development of the cult of the Virgin in

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Cormack, *Painting the Soul. Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds*, London, 1997, 57 (where the author discusses the rise of double sided icons that depicted on the one side the Virgin with the Child and on the other the Crucifixion), 113 (for the rise of the representation of Christ as the Man of Sorrows), and my discussion of this subject in chapter V.

relation to Christology. The Nestorian controversy is perhaps the first instance when the Virgin Mary was taken as a means for the understanding of Christology and was subsequently elevated to the status of a symbol of Orthodoxy. Writers of the fifth century drew attention not only to the figure of the Mother of God and her virginal childbirth but also to the passion of the Lord. The Incarnation and the Crucifixion were the two instances that most emphatically demonstrated the ultimate sacrifice of God. The earliest surviving laments of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross come from Syria. The most representative authors of the Syriac Orient, such as Ephrem the Syrian and Jacob of Sarug, are studied with reference to the celebrated poet Romanos the Melode. Special attention is given to the *kontakia* by Romanos and especially to his hymn on Mary at the foot of the Cross, a text that may be considered as the first surviving fully developed Marian lament and the one that greatly influenced all subsequent compositions on this theme.

Parallel to the function of the Virgin in the Christological debate of the fifth century was the role of the Mother of God in the Iconoclastic controversy. The third chapter examines the as yet undefined place of the Mother of God in the Iconoclastic controversy on the basis of contemporary historiographical and hagiographical sources. Although there is insufficient evidence to prove that the Iconoclasts rejected the veneration of the Mother of God, it is clear that the veneration of the Virgin Mary acquired a prominent place in the writings of the Iconophiles. Moreover, the defenders of icons accused their opponents of rejecting the veneration of Mary, an allegation that was linked to the arguments employed by the Iconophiles for the defence of images. Within the context of the

debate over the artistic representation of the divine, the Virgin Mary was associated with the cult of images due to her crucial role in the Incarnation of the Word on the basis of which the legitimacy of the veneration of icons was defended by the Iconophiles.

The role of the Mother of God in the Iconoclastic period and the way in which the Theotokos became part of the ideological discourse of the Iconophile camp is the subject of the fourth chapter.[25] During the eighth and ninth centuries Iconophile writers produced a voluminous corpus of Marian homilies and hymns that reveals the association of the cult of the Virgin with the cult of icons. In terms of style the homilists and hymnographers of the Iconoclastic period place particular emphasis on the emotions and the senses, whereas in terms of content they draw attention to the Mother of God and the Passion of the Lord. As in the example of the fifth century so in the eighth and ninth centuries the birth and death of Christ are the two instances of his earthly life in which the fullness of his economy is exemplified. And these were the two instances on which Byzantine writers focused. The Mother of God was crucial for the Incarnation; how could she be absent from the Crucifixion? Hence, the lament of the Virgin combines the two most important points of incarnational theology: the birth of Christ and his death on the Cross. The Mother of God is thus introduced in the accounts of the Passion encountered in the homiletic literature of the Iconoclastic period. In the

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[25] For Christian discourse as a 'sociolect' fashioned by a sacerdotal class, see R. Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, transl. by R. Miller, Oxford, 1990, 27-29.

fourth chapter the Marian homilies and hymns are studied with reference both to the cult and to the lament of the Virgin Mary.

The fifth chapter deals with the development of the cult of Mary and of her lament at the foot of the Cross in the ninth century. The period following the so-called Triumph of Orthodoxy witnessed the consolidation of the developments of the previous century. This last chapter focuses on the homiletic and hymnographical texts of the post-Iconoclastic period in which the fully developed lament of Mary is encountered. In the homiletic corpus of the patriarch Photius and George of Nicomedia the Mother of God appears not simply as the lamenting mother of Christ but as a person that negates the pain, attempts to reverse the course of the events, surrenders to the will of God and is finally converted into a new mode of existence. The death of Christ shall bring the salvation of mankind through the defeat of death. The lament of Mary concludes with the prospect of a triumph.

The lament of the Virgin forms the pattern upon which the Passion of the Lord is narrated by the ninth century homilist George of Nicomedia who offers a unique example of a Marian homily on Good Friday. The lament of the Mother of God is also the subject of the hymns Joseph the Hymnographer, the near contemporary of George of Nicomedia, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The Marian lament as developed in the ninth century was to survive in subsequent centuries until it was finally incorporated into the liturgical books of the Orthodox Church. Like the epic poems of Homer, the liturgical lament does not have a single author. Its composition has to be credited to the tradition of the Church which edited the

homilies and hymns of the original writers, maintaining the images that expressed in the most appropriate manner the sorrow but also the courage of the virgin mother of Christ and the importance of the mystery which brought salvation through the sacrifice of God's only-begotten Son.

Hence, the present study argues that the development of the lament of the Virgin Mary echoed on the one hand the growing cult of the Virgin and on the other hand the growing importance of incarnational theology. The figure of the Mother of God was essential to the correct and full understanding of the Incarnation of the Word which lay at the heart of all the Christological heresies that preoccupied the Byzantine thinkers of the early and middle Byzantine period. In its perfected form the Marian lament, although lyrical in character, echoes fundamental premises inherent in Byzantine theological developments.

CHAPTER I

THE LAMENT OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN ERA

Introduction

The lament of the Virgin Mary did not come properly into being before the sixth century when Romanos the Melode composed his famous hymn on Mary at the foot of the Cross (the first surviving example of a Marian lament).[26] The early Christian era, however, witnessed the development of the cult of the Virgin Mary, the retiring figure of the Gospels, who became a central figure of Christian doctrine. In the present chapter I shall concentrate on the evolution of Mary's cult during the first Christian centuries and on aspects of the Passion of the Lord that were gradually linked with the Virgin to produce the fully developed Marian lament as we shall find it in the Iconoclastic and post-Iconoclastic period. The lament will be traced back to narratives of the Old Testament that influenced writers of the Christian era. The second-century work *On the Pascha* by Melito of Sardis will be examined as a text germane to the evolution of the imagery and the features of the Passion hymns and homilies as well as to the figure of the Mother of God.

The Heritage of Rhetoric

The rhetorical theory of Hermogenes and Aphthonius, to chose two of the better known and imitated rhetors of Byzantium, set the pattern followed by the

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[26] Romanos le Mélode, *Hymnes,* J. Grosdidier de Matons (ed.), vol. IV, SC 128, Paris, 1967, 160-184.

literati of the Empire in the composition of any literary work, whether historiography, poetry or homiletics.[27] The elementary rhetorical exercises, commonly called *progymnasmata,* that were used by the Byzantines, provided the material that was used also for the composition of the lament.[28] However, among the basic categories mentioned by the rhetors, there is no particular exercise that could have been used as the model for the composition of the lament as such. The lament embraces features derived from a variety of progymnasmatic forms. In modern studies of the lament the rhetorical figures have been analysed with reference to the ancient predecessors of the genre, namely, the *monodia, logos*

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[27] W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia,* Cambridge, Mass., 1961; P. Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism,* transl. by H. Lindsay and A. Moffatt, Byzantina Australiensia 3, Canberra, Canberra 1986; N.G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium,* London, 1983, 18-27; R. Webb, "A Slavish Art? Language and Grammar in Late Byzantine Education and Society," *Dialogos, Hellenic Studies Review* 1, 1994, 81-103.

[28] The term *progymnasmata* is encountered in the fifth c. B.C. but it became more common during the first Christian centuries. The four works that survive and that formed the basis of Christian education in Byzantium are those by Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius and Nikolaos. The *Souda* names other authors, but their work has not come down to us. As Webb suggests, the surviving exercises represent just the skeleton of a taught course; see R.H. Webb, *The Transmission of the 'Eikones' of Philostratos and the Development of 'Ekphrasis' from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance,* Unpublished Ph.D., University of London, 1992, 33 *n.*12 ; G. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric Under Christian Emperors,* Princeton, New Jersey, 1983, 54-56; The *progymnasmata* served as a preparation for declamation; D.A. Russell, *Greek Declamation,* Cambridge, 1983. The exercises included in the textbook of Aphthonius are 14: fable, narration, *chreia,* proverb, refutation, confirmation, commonplace, encomium, blame, comparison, characterisation, description, thesis and *eisphora tou nomou.*

paramythitikos, and the more formal *epitaphios logos*.[29] The lament also borrows elements from the rhetorical exercises of *ethopoiia* and *ekphrasis* performed in the elaboration of the qualities of the deceased, but also in giving expression to the grief of the one who laments. Nowadays, although the question of continuity and discontinuity between ancient Greek and Byzantine tradition still remains an issue,[30] scholarship has dealt (though not conclusively) with the extent to which Byzantine literary tradition is indebted to its Greco-Roman predecessors.[31] Can

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[29] See for example, H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium,* Princeton, 1981, 91-108; E. de Martino, *Morte e pianto rituale nel mondo antico. Dal lamento pagano al pianto di Maria,* Turin, 1958.

[30] Preoccupation with the issue of continuity has not always proved fruitful for the interpretation of a particular subject; art-historians have recently dealt with the fundamental issue of 'continuity vs. discontinuity' in Early Christian culture, stressing the degree of transformation that took place in Late Antiquity. Finney and Mango (P.C. Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art,* New York, 1994 and M. Mundell Mango, "Imperial Art in the Seventh Century," in Paul Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th -13th Centuries,* Aldershot, Hampshire, 1994), stress continuity, adopting the point of view of earlier studies such as S.G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity,* Berkeley and Los Anngeles, 1981. On the other hand, Elsner and Mathews point out the change of artistic idiom; J. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer,* Cambridge, 1995, emphasizes the change of artistic language but particularly the change in the way that the beholder perceived a work of art. See also, T. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art,* Princeton, 1993; and W.E. Kleinbauer's review of this book in *Speculum* 70, 1995, 937-941.

[31] Among the numerous studies of the subject see D.L. Clark, *Rhetoric in Graeco-Roman Education,* New York, 1957; G. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times,* Chapel Hill, 1980; *idem, Greek Rhetoric Under Christian Emperors*; G.L. Kustas, "The Function and Evolution of Byzantine Rhetoric," *Viator* 1, 1970, 55-73 in which the author gives a concise account

we study the lament as a distinct literary genre; even more, does the lament of the Virgin constitute a sub-genre in itself? After all, the combination of rhetorical forms was not only legitimate according to the rules of rhetoric, but also was praised by teachers of rhetoric as important as Hermogenes and Quintillian.[32]

Some of the most frequently recurring elements in the lament involve the pattern of antithesis evolved from the happiness of the past and the destitution of the present, the despair about a future without the beloved person, the injustice associated with death, the eulogy of the deceased, the despair and loneliness of the person that laments, and the participation of nature. The contrast between periods of time, past and present or present and future, derives from rhetorical *monody*. According to Menander, the funerary speech should be divided into three periods of time: the past, where the speaker should eulogise the deceased, employing the rhetorical form of an *encomium;* the present, where reference should be made to the present circumstances, since the speech is more effective if pity is induced by reference to visible events and present happenings; and the future where the speaker has to refer to the hopes placed on the deceased by his family. If the person were young, Menander suggests that the whole lament

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of the evolution of rhetoric in Byzantium paying particular attention to the corpus of Hermogenes and Aphthonius; and more recently, Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire. The Development of Christian Discourse,* Sather Classical Lectures, vol. 55, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991 (henceforth, Cameron, *The Rhetoric of Empire*) *passim;* Cameron shows how literary forms of antiquity acquired new meaning and were used in Christian discourse during the first Christian centuries.

[32] See G. Kustas, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric,* Analecta Vlatadon 17, Thessaloniki 1973, 15-16; T. Conley, "Byzantine Teaching on Figures and Tropes: An Introduction," *Rhetorica* 4, 1986, 335-374.

should be based on his age and nature.[33] The eulogy of the deceased and of the person who laments employs elements derived from the rhetorical exercise of *ethopoiia,* i.e. the character study. The qualities of the persons lamenting or being bemourned are elaborated for the purpose of heightening emotion. Thus, the injustice of death in the lament of the Theotokos often takes the form of anti-Jewish polemic since, according to our texts, Jews were responsible for the death of Christ. Anti-Jewish polemic employs forms derived from rhetorical *psogos* (blame). Finally, all the components of the speech, whether in prose or verse, are expressed within the framework of *ekphrasis,* which renders the description vivid in the eyes of the congregation and achieves the main objective of the preacher or the hymnographer: the emotional involvement and the participation of his audience.[34] Above all other rhetorical exercises, *ekphrasis* merits a special place

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[33] D.A.Russell and N.G.Wilson (eds.), *Menander Rhetor,* Oxford, 1981, *Περι ' Επιδεικτικων, Περι Μονῳδίας,* XVI, 200-206. Menander of Laodicea takes his model from Homer's monodies placed in the mouth of Andromache, Priam and Hecuba, "appropriate to their several characters, as though he wished to prove to us that he was not ignorant of these matters," 202-203.

[34] L. James and R. Webb, " *To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places:* Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium," *Art History* 14. 1, March 1991, 1-17 (henceforth, "Ekphrasis"); H. Maguire, "Truth and Convention in Byzantine Descriptions of Works of Art," *DOP* 28, 1974, 111-140; see also the studies by M. Whitby, "The Occasion of Paul the Silentiary's *Ekphrasis* of St Sophia," *CQ* 35, 1985, 215-228; R. Macrides and P. Magdalino, "The Architecture of Ekphrasis: Construction and Context of Paul the Silentiary's Poem on Hagia Sophia," *BMGS* 12, 1988, 47-82.

in the study of the lament, since it is this rhetorical figure that invests *threnos* with all its dramatic and emotional weight.[35]

The term *ekphrasis* was used by the authors of Late Antiquity and Byzantium not only for the pictorial representation of works of art, but also for the vivid representation in words of any event or scene.[36] More particularly, Christian authors used *ekphrasis* in order to describe an inner reality and to render this hidden side of either a work of art or a person vividly 'before the eyes' of the audience.[37] The fact that literary laments served as inspiration for artists to

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[35] For a more detailed analysis of *ekphrasis* with reference to the texts of the ninth century, see below, chapter IV.

[36] H. Maguire, "The Classical Tradition in the Byzantine *Ekphrasis*" in M.Mullett and R.Scott (eds.), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition,* Birmingham, 1981, 94-102 and esp. 94-95. For the use of rhetorical *ekphrasis* as a source for art historians, see K. McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm: the Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol," *DOP* 37, 1983, 91-121 with reference to the Syriac hymn for the inauguration of the cathedral of Edessa, and cf. A. Palmer, "The Inauguration Anthem of Hagia Sophia in Edessa: A New Edition and Translation with Historical and Architectural Notes and a Comparison with a Contemporary Constantinopolitan Kontakion," (with an appendix by Lyn Rodley), *BMGS* 12, 1988, 117-167. Palmer and Rodley, providing convincing argument clearly disagree with McVey's opinion that the symbolic language of the poem, ascribed to the literary circle of Jacob of Saroug, is suggestive of architectural forms.

[37] In the *progymnasmata* of Aphthonius (ed. H. Rabe, Leipzig, 1926, 36-41), dating probably to the fourth century, *ekphrasis* is described as *λόγος περιηγηματικος ὑπ'ὄψιν ἄγων ἐναργῶς το δηλούμενον.* This definition became the subject of a rhetorical commentary by John of Sardis in the ninth century (Ioannis Sardiani, *Commentarium in Aphthonii Progymnasmata,* ed. H.Rabe, Leipzig, 1928, 215-230). According to Kennedy (*Greek Rhetoric,* 275-77) John's commentaries "are regarded as an early sign of the resurgence of learning in the ninth century and were well known to his Byzantine successors." For later commentators of Aphthonius see Kennedy, *op.cit.,* 312 and *n.*32.

produce new iconographic types makes *ekphrasis* in the lament even more interesting since emphasis is laid on the visual aspect both of the literary and the artistic compositions.[38] At this point, it is sufficient to note that *ekphrasis* is employed in all the laments, either in prose or in verse, with the sole exception of the short poems which refer to the Mother of God at the foot of the Cross, the *stavrotheotokia*.[39] The standard themes of the lament (description of persons, participation of nature, etc.) are brought to life by means of vivid description that entails the use of inventive adjectives and metaphors, rhythmical phrases, antithesis, rhetorical questions, exclamations and above all powerful imagery that we shall see later with reference to particular texts.

Although the lament does not constitute a literary genre in itself, the laments of the Virgin in the Byzantine tradition can be studied as a group of texts characterised by common elements and means of expression. In the following chapters we shall see the stock of themes and images used for the composition of the lament, as well as the way in which changes of imagery reflect changes in the cult itself of the Mother of God.

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[38] Maguire, *Art and Eloquence,* 102 ff.; however, it appears that word and image were interwoven in terms of function since the ultimate scope of both was to render the divine reality vivid before the believer. From the numerous articles on the subject by H.L.Kessler, see his "Pictures as Scripture in Fifth-Century Churches," in *Studies in Pictorial Narrative,* London, 1994, 357-392; L. Duggan, "Was Art Really the 'Book of the Illiterate'?" in *Word and Image* 5, 1989, 227-251.

[39] The *stavrotheotokia* included in the *Triodion* are ascribed to Theodore the Stoudite; however, writers of the ninth century, such as Joseph the Hymnographer and Leo the Wise, also wrote short poems about Mary at the foot of the Cross. For discussion of the

The Lament in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, lamentation is directed to the Lord of Hosts who is called upon to deliver the people from misfortune. In the second Book of Kings, the Shunammite woman saw her son dying in front of her eyes.[40] Instead of lamenting, she rushed to the prophet of God, Elisha, believing that he was able to reverse the misfortune befalling her family. She caught the man of God "by the feet" and compelled him to go to her son who was brought back to life after the prophet had prayed to God and stretched himself over the young man.[41] The narrative does not allow space for a real lament, particularly since the purpose of the text is to recount the miracle performed by Elisha. However, the dynamism of the action distinctly reveals the distress of the mother. When she visits the prophet, with "her soul vexed in her", she challenges him, reminding Elisha that she had not asked for the miraculous conception of her son.[42]

The Lamentations of Jeremiah offer an example of a lament that, although thematically different from the lament of the Virgin, bears some resemblance to it

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stavrotheotokia see below, chapter IV and S. Janeras, *Le vendredi-saint dans la tradition liturgique byzantine,* Studia Anselmiana 99, Analecta Liturgica 12, Rome, 1988.

[40] 2 Kings 4.

[41] 2 Kings 4:31-35.

[42] The Shunammite and her husband were an elderly, childless couple. The woman had been so good to the prophet that he made her conceive a child miraculously in return for her kindness in offering him bread each time he was passing by her house and later for urging her husband to build a room with a bed, a table and a chair, and a candlestick for the 'man of God'. When Elisha announced to her that she would bear a child, she told him: "Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid." 2 Kings 4:16.

and shows that it might well have served as a model for the composition of later laments. The text is divided into two parts; in the first part, chapters 1-3, the author describes the city as a person weeping while she contrasts the glorious past to the present: "Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old." [43] In the second part, chapters 4-5, Jeremiah speaks directly and pleads with the Lord to appease his wrath against the transgressions of the city.[44] The Lamentations end with a supplication to the Lord and an expression of hope for the future. The division into three periods of time that we saw in monody can be applied to this text as well.

The Lamentations contain themes and images that will be encountered in the study of the lament of the Virgin, such as the description of the misfortune and the misery of the present, the invitation of people to share in the lament,[45] and the detailed account of the destruction afflicted by enemies. The lament implies

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[43] Lamentations 1:7.

[44] See Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament*, 83-85 in which the author discusses laments for the fall of cities in ancient Greek tragedies, such as Euripides' *Trojan Women* and Aeschylus' *Persians*. Alexiou treats the subject briefly, holding that it does not belong to the group of ritual, functional laments. I think that at least in the case of laments for cities in the Old Testament there is a remarkable similarity of themes and treatments in laments of Mary. Probably this is due to the fact that the lament for Christ supersedes the narrow framework of a personal lament, as Christ's death is a universal event that concerns the entire body of the Church. See also, F.W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible*, Biblica et Orientalia 44, Rome, 1993; P. Ferris, *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Atlanta, 1993.

[45] Lamentations 1:18, "...hear, I pray you, all people and behold my sorrow."

loneliness associated with the loss either of a former state, such as prosperity, or of a beloved person. Jeremiah, like the Virgin, looks for comforters but there is nobody to share his grief.[46] The person who laments is found alone in a hostile environment, surrounded by the wrath of his enemies. Youth and virginity are another two themes around which laments are built, and it is not surprising that, like the time division of monody, they are to be met with both in ancient Greek rhetoric and in the biblical text of the Lamentations.[47] The imagery of flowing tears, and the sword and arrows that pierce the heart of Jeremiah, is mirrored in standard elements of the lament of the Virgin.[48] The person who laments loses his strength and sense of hope as he confronts the disaster of the present situation, but he tries to discern a ray of hope in the future.[49] Jeremiah dwells on the endurance that is advised in the Psalms and trusts that God will answer his supplication.[50] The endurance of the lamenting Virgin is one of the themes of the laments that we shall examine, although in the case both of Jeremiah and of the Virgin, such

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[46] *Ibid,* 1:17, "Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her"; *ibid,* 1:21, "They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me."

[47] Special reference to the virgins and the young men of Jerusalem is made throughout the text. I quote the elegant metaphor where the young men of the city are compared to fine gold: *ibid,* 4:2, "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of a potter!". See also, *ibid,* 2:21"my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword."

[48] *Ibid,* 1:16, "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water..."; *ibid,* 3:12, "He [God] hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow." *ibid,* 3:13, "He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter my reins."

[49] *Ibid,* 3:18-26.

[50] The author at this point includes a series of allusions to the Psalms. *Ibid,* 3:21-66.

endurance is not easy; it is rather the result of a painful process that requires a growth in faith.

The contrast between past and present as well as the compassion of nature are elements that are also found in other laments for cities in the Bible. In the lamentation for Tyre,[51] the city is personified and the lament develops around the contrast between its former beauty and prosperity and its present misery. The same contrast characterises the brief lament for Babylon in the enigmatic text of Revelation.[52] In the lament for the city of Tyre nature participates in its own way: "Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure." [53] The ritual dimension of the lament in the Old Testament is seen in the way in which Joseph laments for his father Jacob.[54] The lament lasts for forty days and the funeral for another seven days. The lament in the Old Testament is not an expression of the 'common' people and is certainly not the exclusive domain of women. Out of nine examples studied women participate in only two; in all other cases it is men who lament and the character of the text does not necessarily correspond to a formal *epitaphios* in which one would expect a male orator. The lamentation of king David for Abner[55] is of a distinctly personal character and the same is true of the lament of Joseph for Jacob, and Jeremiah for Josiah.

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[51] Ezek. 26:17.

[52] Rev. 18:10.

[53] Ezek. 26:18.

[54] Gen. 50:1-10.

[55] 2 Samuel 3:31-33.

The Age of Typology

During the early Christian era, the Old Testament did not serve merely as a pattern upon which Christian writing was modelled. It also presented Christian authors with the challenge of establishing continuity. In this formative period the Mother of God was invested with a multitude of epithets, most of them deriving from the Old Testament.[56] During the 'age of typology' a main concern of the Christian apologists was to show the link between the Old and the New Covenant and to derive additional value from the prestige of tradition.[57] This is also a preoccupation of Matthew's Gospel (5:17) which sacrifices the appearance of historicity for the model of the Old Testament in trying to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and the fulfilment of the Law and that the Old and New Testaments form part of a single revelation. Christ appears saying: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."[58] It was during the first Christian centuries that the Mother of God was termed the Second Eve, perhaps the most popular of all the epithets attributed to her; use of this attribute multiplied as the centuries went by, since it was felt to transmit the essential role of Mary in the mystery of salvation, i.e. the reversal of Eve's curse and the subsequent salvation of mankind. It has been argued by Archimandrite Ephrem that the 'types' found and attributed to the Virgin by hymnographers and

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[56] Typology with reference to Mary will be dealt with below in chapter I.

[57] See now F. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture,* Cambridge, 1997, 192-195 and esp. *n.* 23 on p. 194.

[58] Matthew 5:17.

homilists alike were not the product of a conscious effort, but that the writers, who almost certainly knew the Scriptures by heart, in contemplating the word of God drew spontaneously on images and metaphors from the Old Testament. As he puts it: "Their theology emerges from prayer and contemplation, from 'lectio divina' in its old sense; it is not the product of what the Fathers, particularly St Ephrem, call prying or inquisitive investigation."[59]

In a fallen world Christ appears and redeems mankind; but his redemption was made possible only through the willingness and obedience of Mary. Accordingly, Christ was often called the Second Adam, who through his coming, suffering, death and resurrection made salvation possible for mankind. The key to the typological reference was Mary's virginity which, it was argued, annihilated the curse inflicted upon mankind at the Fall, a virginity perceived in terms of the association between sin, sex and death.[60] It is precisely this association that dictates the parallel treatment of the subjects of typology and virginity. Within the linear development of historical chronology we see first the elaboration of typology in the second and third centuries, followed by the more extensive treatment of virginity in the fourth century by the Cappadocians and John Chrysostom.

Mary in the New Testament

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[59] Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, "Mary in Eastern Christian Literature," *Epiphany* 1989, 310-321, and esp. 311.

[60] E. Pagels, *Adam, Eve and the Serpent,* 2nd ed., London, 1990, 78 ff.

The Mother of God is barely mentioned in the New Testament; all references to her are almost in passing and do not provide much detail concerning her life.[61] The earliest reference is to be found in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians where Jesus is said to have been "made of a woman".[62] References to the Virgin Mary in the Synoptic Gospels are minimal. In the Gospel of Mark there are only two passing references to Mary as the Mother of Jesus.[63] The Gospels of Luke and Matthew recount the infancy of Christ, and Mary is mentioned several times.[64] The Gospel of Luke is the richest in references to the Mother of God who appears in the accounts of the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity and the Presentation in the Temple. It is perhaps this Gospel that provides most of the material we possess on the Mother of God, apart from the apocryphal literature.[65] In addition, in the Acts Mary is said to have prayed with the Apostles in Jerusalem after the Ascension.[66]

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[61] See J. Samaha, "Mary in the Byzantine Mind," *ByzSlav* LVIII, 1997, 338-342 and esp. 338.

[62] Gal. 4:4. The Epistle to the Galatians (A.D. 57), together with the other Epistles of Paul, is probably the earliest part of the New Testament; if that is true, then this reference is indeed the earliest dated reference to the Mother of God.

[63] Mark 3:31 and 6:3.

[64] Luke 1:26-27, 1:34, 1:38, 1:42, 2:7, 2:19; Matthew 1:25, 2:1-12, 2:13 etc.

[65] M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex. The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary,* London, 1976, 7; Warner considers Luke's Gospel as: "the scriptural source for all the great mysteries of the Virgin; the only time that she is the heart of drama in the Bible is in Luke's beautiful verses."

[66] Acts 1:14

In the Gospel of John, Mary appears at two critical moments in the earthly life of Jesus: the first at the wedding of Cana and the second at the foot of the Cross on Golgotha.[67] These two moments became focal points of subsequent Marian study.[68] The marriage of Cana, the occasion at which Jesus reveals his true identity as the Son of God, is a moment of great importance in the earthly life of Jesus and for the place of his mother. As for the presence of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross, it became a theme elaborated by hymnographers and homilists throughout the Byzantine period and will be examined in detail in the following chapters. Luke and John were the Evangelists who referred most extensively to the Mother of God. The close relationship of the evangelist Luke with the Virgin is reflected in the many legends of the icon of the Mother of God that Luke is said to have painted from life and the legend inspired other such icons.[69]

Aspects of Marian Devotion: The Approach of Early Christian Writers

In the early Christian centuries, the virginity of Mary, defended and praised to a great extent by the Church Fathers, exemplified the miraculous birth

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[67] Jn 2; Jn 19. M.Thurian, *Marie mère du Seigneur, figure de l'Église,* Taizé, 1963.

[68] Kallistos Ware, *Mary Theotokos in the Orthodox Tradition,* Surrey, 1997; Fr John Breck, "Mary in the New Testament," *Pro Ecclesia* 2/4, 1993, 460-472.

[69] According to Belting (*Likeness and Presence*, 49), "Luke ... qualified as a painter of Mother and Child through his exact description of Jesus' childhood in his gospel." See the reproduction of the miniature in the Cod. Sinaiticus graecus 233, fol. 87v dating to the thirteenth century in Belting, *op.cit.*, fig. 14. For surviving examples of this iconographic type of a much later date, see K. Weitzmann et.al. (eds.), *The Icon,* London, 1982, 370. For a more detailed discussion of the Hodegetria icons see below, chapter V.

of Christ and the physical reality of the Incarnation of the Word.[70] Early Christian literature concerned itself largely with interpretation of the Bible and the establishment of continuity between the Old and the New Testaments while at the same time performing an apologetic function in refuting accusations of pagans and Jews and the 'heretical' beliefs of various sects. This is the context within which the figure of the Virgin was introduced and used as a proof of the virginal birth of Christ through which the reality of the Incarnation was affirmed. Already in the second century, Justin Martyr (d. c. 165) and Irenaeus of Lyons (c.115-202), basing themselves on the typology of the First and Second Adam found in Paul,[71] contrast the disobedience of the First Eve to the obedience of the Second in a typological context.

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[70] For a general discussion see P. Sherwood, "Byzantine Mariology," *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 14, 1962, 384-409; M. Gordillo, *Mariologia Orientalis,* OCA 141, Rome, 1954; J.A. Aldama, *Maria en la Patristica de los siglos I y II,* Madrid, 1970.

[71] I Cor. 15, 22: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all be made alive," and again in I Cor. 15,45: "And so it is written, 'The first man Adam was made a living soul'; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Spourlakou (A. Spourlakou-Eutychiadou, *Η Παναγία Θεοτόκος Τύπος Χριστιανικῆς Ἁγιότητος,* Ph.D. thesis, Theological School, University of Athens, Athens, 1990, 24-25) objects to the correspondence of the title 'Second Eve' to the 'Second Adam' on the basis that it has been used by Roman Catholic theologians in order to prove the role of Mary as corredemptrix. For her, the term 'Second Eve' refers exclusively to the juxtaposition of the disobedience of the First Eve to the obedience of the Second. It would be reasonable to reconsider Spourlakou's thesis taking into consideration the perennial preoccupation of Christian authors with symmetry, in literature and in art, and to suggest that, without necessarily meaning to promote the idea of Mary as corredemptrix, the first Christian authors saw an analogy between the role of Jesus and his mother in the salvation of mankind.

Justin Martyr presented Christ as the eternal Logos of God, through whom God spoke to the prophets of the Old Testament. Having a strong philosophical background, Justin sought to interpret the Bible on a basis that would be in accordance with Christian revelation and reasonable discourse.[72] For him, Christian revelation was the only true philosophy.[73] Considering miracles inadequate to explain reality, he employed the prophecies of the Old Testament in order to show the link between the stories of the Old Testament and the actual events of the New Testament, the *typos* and the *antitypos*.[74] For Justin, Scripture is viewed as the word of God disclosing divine truth.[75] With reference to Mary, he defends the virginal birth of Christ, following closely the account of Luke. He asserts it in a definitive manner as a common belief without seeking an explanation of the motives that led to the Incarnation of the Word of God. He views Jesus Christ as both divine and human: in Mary's womb Cosmic Reason

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[72] Justin's philosophical background was that of eclectic middle Platonism and it was while a Platonist that he converted to Christianity. He exercised a strong influence on the Christian apologists Tatian and Athenagoras. See L.W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr. His Life and Thought,* London, 1967, vii, 5-10; F.L. Cross, *The Early Christian Fathers,* London, 1960, 48-53; H. Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition,* Oxford, 1966, 1-30; F. Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 52-54.

[73] Barnard, *Justin Martyr,* 36-38.

[74] O. Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition,* Leiden, 1987.

[75] Justin, *Dial.* lxxxii.3. The first nine chapters of Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* were edited fairly recently by J.C.M. van Winden, *An Early Christian Philosopher. Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, Chapters One to Nine,* Philosophia Patrum I, Leiden, 1971. For the rest of the text I used the French edition by G. Archambault, *Justin.*

became accessible to men as a human being of flesh and blood. Justin compares the virginal birth of Christ with stories about the birth of Perseus, Dionysus and Hercules,[76] considering the former to be more credible because, unlike the pagan myths, the account of the birth of Christ did not represent the divine having intercourse with a human woman.[77] Again, an additional argument for the physical reality of the virginal birth of Christ is that it was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament.[78] Justin refers to the prophecy of the 'stone cut without hands' as indicative of the divine nature of Christ's birth.[79] His birth from the Virgin was accomplished,

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Dialogue avec Tryphon, Textes et documents pour l'étude historique du christianisme 8, 2 vols., Paris, 1909.

[76] Justin, I *Apol.* xxii.5; *Dial.* lxx.5, lxix. 2-3. The two apologies of Justin were recently edited by Miroslav Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris Apologiae Pro Christianis,* Patristische Texte und Studien Bd. 38, Berlin, New York, 1994. See also A.W.F. Blunt, *The Apologies of Justin Martyr,* Cambridge, 1911.

[77] Justin, I *Apol.* xxxiii; *Dial.* lxvii.1, lxx. 1, 3, lxxxiv. 1.

[78] Justin often refers to the prophecy of Isaiah, vii. 14 for which see below in chapter I.

[79] The prophecy derives from Dan. 2:34, "thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces"; Justin, *Dial.* lxxvi.1. The blood of Christ made by God was prefigured by the blood of the grape. For the prophecy see Deut. 32:13-14, "he made him ride on the high places of the earth that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine and milk of sheep with fat of lambs and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape"; *Dial.* lxxvi.2. In the prophecy the 'blood' of the grape, prefiguring Christ's blood, is seen as the summit of the abundance God offers to his people in the same way that the Incarnation, specifically the blood of Christ, is the most precious offering of God to mankind. In the *Dialogue with Trypho* Christ is described as the stone or the rock, East, beginning, day,

> "in order that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be destroyed in the same manner in which it had originated. For Eve an undefiled virgin conceived the word of the serpent and brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary, filled with faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced to her the good tidings that the spirit of God would come upon her, and therefore the Holy One born of her would be the Son of God, answered: 'Be it done unto me according to Thy word.' And indeed she gave birth to him concerning whom we have seen so many passages of Scriptures were written and by whom God destroys both the serpents and those angels and men who have become like the serpent, but frees from death those who repent from their sins and believe in Christ." [80]

In this passage, the Virgin is presented as the Second Eve. The participation of Mary in the divine plan of salvation rests on her obedient acceptance of the news announced to her by the angel in the Annunciation. Justin is concerned to establish a perfect parallel between Eve and Mary and for this purpose he describes Eve as an undefiled virgin, an assertion that is not to be found in the account of Genesis. On the contrary, in Genesis (1:28) God ordered Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth. Justin depicts the Fall as a conception and birth that brought forth disobedience and death. An inconsistency is to be noted at this point since the disobedience of Eve was the cause rather than the result of

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man, sword, rod, Israel, Jacob, first-born, king and priest, for which see *Dial.* lxii; c; cxxviii.

[80] Justin, *Dial.* c.

the Fall. But Justin sacrifices accuracy in order to achieve the typological reflection in every detail: conception, birth and 'offspring'. Eve and Mary are both described as virgins who conceive although neither of them by means of sexual intercourse. The first conceives by the **word** of the serpent, whereas Mary conceives by the **Word** of God. They both produce an offspring: Eve brings forth disobedience and death, Mary the Son of God through whom God destroys the offspring of the first Eve. In Justin's account we find the first image of Eve and Mary conceiving through the ear, a motif that originally derives from mythology and that was to become a favourite subject of Syriac hymnography.[81] The way in which Justin refers to God destroying the serpent is reminiscent of the way in which God is revealed in the Old Testament.[82] Writers of subsequent centuries, such as Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus, et. al., followed both the basic idea of antithesis between the First and the Second Eve as well as its imagery.

In the work of Irenaeus, Eve is also described as a disobedient virgin and is contrasted to Mary whose obedience is seen as the cause of the salvation of mankind:

> "And as by means of a virgin who did not obey, humanity was smitten, fell and died, so by the Virgin who hearkened to the word of God, humanity once more revived, by life recovered life." [83]

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[81] For discussion see Lash, "Mary in Eastern Christian Thought," 313-314.

[82] For the anthropomorphic expressions of God see below, chapter I, 'The Impassibility of God.'

[83] Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies,* 3,22,4. Note the parallel between the *troparion* of the Resurrection sung on Easter Sunday (*Pentekostarion,* Apostolike Diakonia, 1984, 1) where Christ "trampled down death by death" and the passage of Irenaeus where

Irenaeus was concerned with the explanation of Christian doctrine by reference to Old Testament prophecies.[84] However, his approach to Christian teaching was more pastoral than theological. He expostulated with the Gnostics,[85] and he considered human reason incapable of grasping divine truth which can be approached only through faith. According to Timothy, in his effort to solve the problem of the boundaries between human reason and divine revelation, Irenaeus was the first writer to discuss the nature of theology in such detail.[86] But what is relevant to his understanding of the Virgin is first the application of Old Testament prophecies for an interpretation of the Gospel and second his acceptance of Christian revelation as an absolute authority. These are the assumptions that underlay Irenaeus' treatment of the Virgin in his work *Against Heresies.*[87] Mary filled with joy is seen by Irenaeus as a prophetic representation

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through the Virgin humanity "by life recovered life". Irenaeus' work *Adversus Haereses* consists of five books, all published in the SC series. The third book was edited by A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre III,* 2 vols., SC 210 and 211, Paris, 1974.

[84] This attitude of Irenaeus is particularly prominent in his *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching,* a work discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century in an Armenian translation. For a French translation of the work see L.M. Froidevaux, *Irénée de Lyon. Demonstration de la prédication apostolique,* SC 62, Paris, 1971. The centre of his theology was the recapitulation (*ἀνακεφαλαίωσις*) of all things in Christ, the Second Adam. See J.T. Nielsen, *Adam and Christ in the Theology of Irenaeus of Lyons,* Assen, 1968.

[85] *Against Heresies,* III. For discussion, see G. Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Epiphanius,* Waterloo, 1981.

[86] H.B. Timothy, *The Early Christian Apologists and Greek Philosophy,* Assen, 1973.

[87] See for example with reference to the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* III, 9, 2, 16. With reference to Ps. 84:12, Irenaeus III, 5, 1, 20-24 . Other

of the Church which addresses the *Magnificat* to Christ.[88] His preoccupation with continuity between the Old and the New Testament is revealed in his words,

> "the Gospel demonstrates that the God who had spoken to our Fathers... is the same God..."[89]

For people of the first Christian centuries the flesh of God was a concept difficult to embrace and so they made various attempts to view the matter in such a light that it was consistent with their way of thinking. The role of the Virgin in this process of definition was crucial. The example of Irenaeus, who refuted the Gnostic doctrine according to which Christ had received nothing from the Virgin, is of particular importance to the present study.[90] The Virgin, within this specific

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typological references to the Virgin are to be found in III, 31, 10 and III, 22, 4. The subject of the Annunciation is referred to in III, 10, 2.

[88] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* III, 10, 2, 14-27. In the fourth century and with reference to the *Magnificat,* Mary would be called a 'prophetess' in a commentary on Isaiah attributed to Basil the Great. See Basil of Caesarea, *Enarratio in prophetam Isaiam,* PG 30, cols. 117-668, and esp. col. 477B. For the dubious authorship of the work see P. Humbertclaude, "À propos du commentaire sur Isaïe attribué à s. Basile," *RSR* 10, 1930, 47-68. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Testimonia Adversus Judaeos,* PG 46, cols. 193-233, and esp. col. 208.

[89] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* III, 10, 2, 14-27; by this phrase Irenaeus rebuts the Gnostics who held that the God of the Old Testament was not the Father of Jesus Christ.

[90] *Ibidem,* III, 31, 1. The same notion is refuted by John of Damascus in his work *On Heresies* 31, (*De Haeresibus,* PG 94, col. 697). According to this text Christ is said to have passed through the Virgin, as through a channel, without being affected at all by her human qualities: *Τον δε Χριστον ἀπ'οὐρανοῦ ἐνηνοχέναι την σάρκα, και ὡς δια σωλῆνος τῆς Μαρίας διαπερακέναι.* Peter Brown (*The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity,* New York, 1988, 111-114) associated this notion with the concept that long prevailed in antiquity and according to which

context, is presented as the Second Eve through whom salvation was made possible for mankind, the bridge between Heaven and earth, the ladder that leads to heaven.

Ignatius of Antioch (beginning of second century) is known for his letters to the churches, collected by Polycarp, in which he refers extensively to the importance of the office of the bishop.[91] In his theology Ignatius emphasized the reality of the Incarnation and the motherhood of Mary, therefore opposing the Docetic heresy. It follows that he insisted on the authenticity of the virginal birth of Christ.[92]

One of the first Christian writers to call Mary 'Theotokos' was Origen (c.185-210). [93] Following the pattern of allegorical exegesis that was later to

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children were produced from the sperm of the father whereas the mother was nothing but the soil necessary for childbirth.

[91] Ignatius wrote seven letters on his way to Rome where he was taken to be tried in the early years of the second century; his letters were addressed to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna and to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. For Ignatius see W. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch,* Philadelphia, 1985. See also the edition by Th. Camelot, *Ignace d'Antioche, Polycarpe de Smyrne, Lettres. Martyre de Polycarpe,* SC 10, Paris, 1969.

[92] Ignatius, Eph. 7.2; 18.2; Trall. 9.1, in which he asserts that Christ was truly born the son of God and of Mary.

[93] Origen, Hom on St Luke. (All references to the work *Contra Celsum* are to the edition by H. Borret, *Origène, Contre Celse,* vol. I (books I and II), SC 132, Paris, 1967; vol. II (books III and IV), SC 136, Paris, 1968; vol. III (books V and VI), SC 147, Paris, 1969; vol. IV (books VII and VIII), SC 150, Paris, 1969; and vol. V (tables and indices), SC 227, Paris 1976.) Origen had a pagan education and was fluent in the arguments of all currents of Greek philosophy. But he was also a man of the Church (as he describes himself in Hom. 16 in Luke: H. Crouzel, F. Fournier, P. Périchon, *Origène. Homélies*

flourish in Alexandria, Origen bridged theoretical speculation and Christian discourse although the way in which his views were upheld by his followers, and especially by Evagrius of Pontus, resulted in the eventual anathema laid on Origen by the Second Council of Constantinople (553) during the reign of Justinian I.[94] Origen elaborated on the typological references to the Virgin,[95] and

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sur S. Luc, SC 87, Paris, 1962). His father had died as a martyr when Origen was very young, during the persecution of Septimius Severus. See H. Chadwick, *The Early Church,* London, 1967 and 1990, 100-102; from the vast bibliography on Origen, see J. Daniélou, *Origen,* New York, 1955; C. Kannengiesser and W. Petersen (eds.), *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy,* Notre Dame, 1988; H. Crouzel, *Origen,* San Francisco, 1989. Long before Mary, the epithet 'Theotokos' was used with reference to Isis. For earlier references to Mary as 'Theotokos' see G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon,* Oxford, 1961, 639-641 (henceforth, PGL); and the fragment ascribed to Peter I of Alexandria (d. 311) (PG 18, col. 517 B). Peter was the predecessor of Athanasius of Alexandria and was among the first who applied not only the title of 'Theotokos' but also the title 'Ever-Virgin' to Mary. Gregory Thaumatourgos (d. c. 270) is also important for the development of the cult of the Virgin since he appears to be the author of homilies in honour of the Mother of God. Although no direct evidence survives, a vision of the Virgin is related in a panegyric written by Gregory of Nyssa in honour of the saint. For the text see *De Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi,* (BHGa 715-715b), *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* X, vol. I, G. Heil (ed.), Leiden, New York, Kobenhavn, Köln, 1990, 3-57, (=PG 46, 893-957). For the Marian homilies ascribed to Gregory Thaumatourgos see M. Jugie, "Les homélies mariales attribuées à Gregoire le Thaumatourge," *AB* 43, 1925, 86-95.

[94] His method of interpretation is analysed in the fourth book of his work *On First Principles.* For discussion see Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 82-89. Origen was greatly admired by the Cappadocians (Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus) who compiled his *Philokalia* (Origène, *Philocalie, 1-20. Sur les Écritures,* M. Harl (ed.), SC 302, Paris, 1983; Origène, *Philocalie 21-27. Sur le Libre Arbitre,* E. Junod, SC 226, Paris, 1976). For the influence of Origen see J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology, Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes,* New York, 1974, 35-37.

he also defended Mary's virginity and Christ's virginal birth, so answering the accusations of the Jews and of the pagan Celsus.[96] At the turn of the third century Christian writers, while stressing the virginity and chastity of the Virgin, did not hesitate in their polemical writings to present her as a perfectly human mother and the birth of Christ as a birth like that of any human being. They even went so far as to suggest that Mary had other children apart from Jesus.[97] In the same manner the fourth-century writer John Chrysostom does not always view the Virgin in a favourable light. According to John Meyendorff, the lack of any doctrinal formulations concerning the Virgin Mary, apart from the title of 'Theotokos'

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[95] Origen, *Contra Celsum* I, 34, 3 (with reference to the prophecy of Isaiah that Emmanuel would be born of a virgin). See also I, 35,3; I, 33,25.

[96] Answering Celsus, Origen says: "And which would be more appropriate as the mother of Emmanuel, that is 'God with us', a woman who had had intercourse with a man and conceived by female passion, or a woman who was still chaste and pure and virgin?" (1.35). Origen, *Contra Celsum* I, 32-37; I, 69, 20-21; 2.69. Christ's virginal birth is also asserted in I, 37,2 and I, 37, 11-12. The point was taken up by Epiphanius, *Adv. Haer.* 78, (ed. K. Holl, *Epiphanius. Panarion,* vol. III, GCS 37, Leipzig, 1933=PG 42, col. 708 D; transl. by F.Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book II & III,[Secta 47-80, De Fide],*Leiden-New York, 1987, 601-620); Andrew of Crete, *Oratio in Circumcisionem Domini et in s. Basilium,* (=BHG 262), PG 97, cols. 916 B-C, et.al. Origen also defended Christ's virginal birth against the Ebionites who, in his words, are of two sorts: those who accept that Christ was born from a virgin and those who hold that he was not born in this manner but like the rest of people. See *Contra Celsum,* V, 61, 30-32. Cf. M. Cunningham, "The Mother of God in Early Byzantine Homilies," *Sobornost* 10:2, 1988, 53-67.

[97]Clement of Alexandria (c.160-215), Tertullian (born c. 160) and Origen wrote against the Doketai, Marcionites and Valentinians who rejected Christ's full humanity; according to them Christ was only seemingly human. See Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, PL 2, cols. 336 A-336C; also, *De Carne Christi*, PL 2, 758B-759D.

endorsed at the Council of Ephesus, can be explained by the fact that one of the greatest Fathers of the Church, John Chrysostom, "found it possible to ascribe to Mary not only 'original sin', but also 'agitation', 'trouble' and even, 'love of honour'.[98] No one, of course, would have dared to accuse the great Chrysostom of impiety."[99] This lack of doctrinal formulations concerning the Mother of God is more satisfactorily explained by the fact that in Byzantium Mariology was never conceived separately from Christology. As we shall see in the following chapters, the figure of the Virgin Mary remained a means of understanding the nature and the implications of the Incarnation right to the end of the Christological debates in the middle Byzantine period.

The prominent role played by the virginity of Mary did not coincide simply with the Christological issues of the time, which led to the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, but also with the ideal of a Christian life that gradually took shape from the beginning of the third century, i.e. from the time of the Desert Fathers onwards.[100] As prefigured in the Song of Songs (4:12), the Virgin is "an enclosed garden; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." In the fourth century, virginity becomes a central issue for the monastic ideal and in this context the

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[98] John Chrysostom, *In Matthaeum Homiliae,*44, PG 57, col. 464; *In Johannem (Jn. 2) homiliae,* 21, PG 59, col. 131.

[99] Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology,*148-149.

[100] For the sayings of the Desert Fathers, known as Apophthegmata Patrum, see A.-J. Festugière, (ed.), *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto,* Brussels, 1961. For the development of virginity as an ideal of Christian life see Brown, *Body and Society, passim.* Averil Cameron discusses the symbolic use of virginity in early Christian discourse in "Virginity as Metaphor," *History as Text, The Writing of Ancient History,* London 1989, 181-205.

Virgin is used as a model for secluded life.[101] A relevant passage has been preserved in Coptic and printed among the canons of the Council of Nicaea (325).[102] The prevailing idea of this particular text is that Mary should be the example for virgins and celibates because of her way of life. A similar idea is expressed in the writings of Alexander of Alexandria (d. 328), who advises the nuns of his bishopric to imitate the model of the Virgin Mary, who is the image of heavenly life.[103] The example of Alexander is also followed in a homily ascribed to Athanasius addressed and entitled *To the Virgins.*[104] In the early 380s John Chrysostom comments on virginity in an homonymous treatise in a way that reflects his strong convictions about the rudiments of the Christian faith.[105] In this

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[101] Averil Cameron correctly points to the figure of the martyr Thecla (from the apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla*) who acted as a model of virginity much more than the Virgin herself. See Cameron, "Virginity as Metaphor," 193 and *n.*50. For the attitude of the Syriac poet Ephrem towards marriage and virginity see R. Murray, *Symbols of the Church and the Kingdom,* Cambridge, 1975, 154-157.

[102] F. Haase, "Die koptischen Quellen zum Konzil von Nicaea," in *Studien zum Geschichte und Kultur des Alterums,* 10, 4, 1920, 50-52.

[103] Alexander of Alexandria, while bishop of Alexandria (c.312-328), was the first to oppose Arius' teaching that Christ was not eternal but created by God. He held a local council of hundred bishops at which Arius' teaching was condemned. The decision of this council was endorsed by the Council of Nicaea (325). Only very small samples of Alexander's writings survive; they are published together with those of Athanasius in H.G. Opitz (ed.), *Athanasius Werke,* Berlin, Leipzig, 1934-1935, 6-11, 19-31.

[104] The Coptic version of the homily was discovered and published by Lefort in 1929. L.Th. Lefort, "S. Athanase, *'Sur la virginité',*" *Muséon* 42, 1929, 197-264; *idem, S. Athanase. Lettres festales et pastorales en copte,* CSCO 150, Louvain, 1955, 73-99 (translation in CSCO 151, 1955, 55-80).

[105] For a brief discussion of Chrysostom's Mariology see H. Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion,* London 1963, 74-76.

work Chrysostom eulogises the virtue of abstinence from sexual intercourse while at the same time attacking those who rejected marriage altogether -following the dualistic mentality of the Manichaeans- because such people underestimated the achievement of those who manage to attain to the virginal state which he equates with the angelic life. Chrysostom's view of virginity was not always moderate and his attitude towards women has been a controversial issue. In his treatise *On Virginity* he encourages virgins to endure the troubles of virginal life which are far fewer than the pains and troubles of marriage.[106] He propagates the same ideas in his two treatises *To a Young Widow* and *Single Marriage*.[107] In his homily on the Nativity, Basil the Great states that virginity should be honoured but marriage should not be despised.[108] He describes Mary in terms of the earth out of which Adam was created, since it was out of her flesh that the Logos became incarnate, comparing her virginal womb where Christ assumed his human nature to the earth

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[106] H. Musurillo and B. Grillet, *Jean Chrysostome. La virginité,* SC 125, Paris, 1966.

[107] G.H. Ettlinger and B. Grillet, *Jean Chrysostome. À une jeune veuve. Sur le marriage unique,* SC 138, Paris, 1968. According to Averil Cameron ("Virginity as Metaphor," 196-200) the relationship between literary texts and reality cannot be determined on the basis of these highly rhetorical texts; for an opposite view see P.M. Beagon, "The Cappadocian Fathers, Women and Ecclesiastical Politics," *VigChr* 49, 1995, 165-179 and esp. 165. With reference to the treatment of virginity by the Cappadocians see above and Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion,* 62 ff.; Ch. Christakis, *Virginity in the Cappadocian Fathers,* Ph.D. thesis, King's College London, 1996; J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth, The Story of John Chrysostom - Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop,* London 1995, 45 ff.

[108] Basil of Caesarea, *In Sanctam Christi generationem,*(=BHG 1922), PG 31, cols. 1457-1476, and esp. 1464 B.

from which Adam was made.[109] It is worth noting that the roots of the whole discussion about virginity lay more in the dominant preoccupations and trends of Late Antiquity rather than the New Testament.[110] The only two texts of the New Testament referring to virginity are in the Gospel according to Matthew (19.12), "for there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it", and in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (7.7-9), "For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." In both passages virginity is presented as a way, but certainly not as the only way, of Christian life.[111]

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[109] *Enarratio in prophetam Isaiam,* PG 30, 117-668 and esp.465A; cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *Antirrheticus adversus Apollinarium,* F. Müller (ed.), *Gregorii Nysseni Opera III, I. Opera Dogmatica Minora,* Leiden, 1958, 131-233 (= PG 45, cols.1124-1269).

[110] R. Demos, "Some Comparisons Between Greek and Christian Ideas of Virtues," *GrOrthThR* X, No 1, 1964, 153-160. Note also the captivating imagery (of bridal images, white garments, lit candles, beauty of and desire for the bridegroom) in which virginity is associated with the coming of Christ in the hymn that precedes the epilogue of the *Symposium* of Methodius (d.312). The author employs antithetical imagery to note the contrast between virginity and married life, linked to the sorrow and pain of earthly life. See H. Musurillo and V.H. Debidour, *Méthode d'Olympe. Le banquet,* SC 95, Paris, 1963, 310 ff.

[111] For discussion on virginity see Brown, *The Body and Society,* 259-284 and *passim*; Averil Cameron, "Virginity as Metaphor," 189; V. Harrison, "Male and Female in

Up to this point we have seen the way in which Mary was viewed by the early Christian writers as well as the way in which early Christian writings on Mary reflect contemporary preoccupations and intellectual trends. In the centuries preceding the Council of Ephesus Christian writers expanded and elaborated all the possible typological references relating to the Virgin. [112] Thus, Mary appears as the burning bush seen by Moses, the tree of Jesse, the Ark of the Covenant, the mountain out of which the stone was cut without hands, the manna that fell from

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Cappadocian Theology," *JThS* 41, 1990, 441-71; Beagon, "The Cappadocian Fathers,"165-179. Beagon following Harrison reconsiders Cameron's assumptions expressed in the above-mentioned article. He argues that the principle underlying the anthropology of the Cappadocians was one of equality between genders. I would suggest that his remarks about the different ways that women are portrayed in the works of Basil and the two Gregorys are certainly valid but the analysis of his data does not always convince the reader. I found particularly problematic his deduction of general assumptions on the basis of particular examples derived from the writings of the Cappadocians in which they refer to women of their immediate environment. One could also bring to the attention of the reader the sharp difference of tone between the pastoral writings of Chrysostom and his letters to Olympias. With reference to the anthropology of Basil the Great see his *Homilia in Martyrem Iulittam,* PG 31, cols. 237-262 and esp. col. 241A-C. For the anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa see H.U. von Balthasar, *Presence and Thought, An Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa,* San Francisco, 1995, 135-137; G. Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity. Pagan and Christian Lifestyles,* Oxford, 1993, esp. 122 ff.; cf. M.Y. MacDonald, *Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion,* Cambridge, 1996, 100; D.F. Sawyer, *Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries,* London and New York, 1996, 150-151.

[112] Some of the Old Testament prophecies applied to the Mother of God and associated with the numerous epithets attributed to her are to be found in: Isaiah 11:1,29:12, 53:20, Judges 6:36-40, Numbers 17:1-8, Daniel 2:34, 2 Samuel 6:7-8, Exodus 7:9, 16:14, Deuteronomy 9:10, Ezekiel 16:33, 44:2.

Heaven, the rod of Aaron, Jacob's ladder and Gideon's fleece.[113] In the following chapters we shall see how these images were elaborated by writers in later centuries. Indeed, the typological themes that we found in the writings of the early Christian thinkers formed the background of all subsequent Marian writings. Upon this basis, homilists and hymnographers of succeeding centuries fashioned the portrait of Mary, always adding to it aspects of their contemporary concerns. In the realm of theological speculation the place of the Mother of God was dictated by her role in the accomplishment of the divine plan concerning the healing of Eve's disobedience and the salvation of mankind accomplished through the death of Christ on the Cross.

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[113] The burning bush imagery became standard especially after the fourth century. For an example of its use see Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio in Diem Natalem Christi,* (BHG 1915), PG 46, cols. 1128-1149, and esp. col.1136A. Mary is called the tree of obedience in Irenaeus of Lyons, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching,* 33. For the image of manna see Gregory of Nyssa, *De Vita Moses,* J. Daniélou (ed.), *La Vie de Moïse,* SC 1ter, Paris, 1968, 2, 139 (=PG 44, cols. 297-430, esp. col. 368C). At the time of the Council of Ephesus, Proclus praised the Virgin drawing upon Old Testament images in the following words: "the purest fleece of the heavenly rain, from which the Shepherd put on the sheep...She alone is the bridge of God towards mankind. The dread loom-beam of the economy, on which the robe of the union was woven; whose weaver is the Holy Spirit; the spinner the overshadowing power from on high; the wool, the ancient fleece of Adam; the thread, the immaculate flesh of the Virgin; the shuttle, the ineffable grace of Him who wore it; the craftsman, the Word who came to dwell through hearing..." (transl. by E. Lash), PG 65, col. 681. For discussion of Proclus' use of the typological imagery of the loom see N.P. Constas, "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the Theotokos and the Loom of the Flesh," *JEChSt* 3:2, 1995, 169-194. Most of these images are included in the hymns of Ephrem the Syrian; see Lash, "Mary in Eastern Church Literature," 310-321.

The Impassibility of God

In the Old Testament God is very different from the divinities conceived of by Greek philosophers: he feels anger, jealousy, compassion, pity. He is challenging and is challenged. In the Psalms the anger of God is directed against the wicked and is provoked by the misdeeds of his people. In Psalm 7:11, God gets angry with the wicked and prepares his sword and his bow, the instruments of death, to attack them.[114] More impressive is the depiction of the anger of God in Psalm 78:21 where it is described by the imagery of fire directed against Jacob.[115] In the same psalm, God appears not only angry but also jealous of the idols venerated by Israel.[116] The subject of jealousy is to be found also in Exodus 20:5, where God declares himself as a jealous God with reference to the idols.[117] Jealousy and anger provoked by the veneration of idols are also recorded in

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[114] Ps 7:11-13, "...God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors."

[115] Ps 78:21, "Therefore the Lord heard this and was wrath; so a fire kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel."

[116] Ps 78:58, "For they provoked him to anger with their high places, moved him to jealousy with their graven images."

[117] Ex. 20:4-5, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God,..."

Jeremiah 44:3.[118] In the book of Kings (2 Kings 22:13), the wrath of God is asserted and feared by the people.[119] But God's anger is balanced by his pity and compassion for mankind: God often turns his wrath away and does not destroy the people.[120] The compassion of God is asserted in Psalm 111:4 but also in the Lamentations.[121] Despite the misfortune that fell on his city, Jeremiah attributes the survival of his people to the compassion of the Lord.[122]

In the Old Testament, although instructive and hidden from the eyes of his prophets, God is presented anthropomorphically, where he expresses himself in terms of human feelings. Certainly, there is no mention of God's suffering in the Old Testament; suffering -in its proper sense and not as a state that implies involvement- comes to the fore in the New Testament. God in the Old Testament is said to experience feelings that would be characterised as human, but they do not imply passibility because they are not implied by any necessity. God is moved to anger or compassion by his philanthropy which results from his involvement in

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[118] Jer. 44:3, "Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers."

[119] 2 Kings 22:13, "... for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us."

[120] Ps 78:38, "But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath."

[121] Ps 111:4, "he hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion."

[122] Lam. 3:22, "...it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."

a relationship with man. But this relationship is not necessary for God, just as God was not motivated by necessity to cause the Incarnation, but by his love for mankind. The feelings ascribed to God in the Old Testament do not challenge his identification as God. In the New Testament feelings are experienced albeit from the perspective of the Incarnate Word of God. In his earthly life Jesus experiences the whole range of human feelings including anger, sorrow, but most importantly suffering.

In the New Testament, although the Incarnation of the Word is asserted (for example in the prologue of John, and especially in Jn 1:14), and the Passion of the Lord is recorded in detail, there is no clear verbal formulation with reference to the suffering of Christ. In contrast, Paul and Peter in their epistles assert the suffering of Christ in a definitive manner. Paul has recourse to the suffering of Christ in order to demonstrate the reality of the Incarnation and the fact that, indeed, God assumed fully our own nature.[123] Although God does not change in his essence, through the words of Paul it appears that his Incarnation, his sharing of human suffering and temptation, *enabled* him to be "a merciful and faithful high priest". In the same epistle (Heb. 5:7-9), Paul considers suffering to have been a way through which Christ learned obedience and attained to perfection. Jesus's sharing of our human nature is exemplified at this point

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[123] Heb 2:16-18. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

through his prayers and tears as he faces death.[124] Peter asserts the suffering of Christ as an example given by Jesus for his followers to observe.[125] Finally, Peter asserts the suffering itself of Christ and advises Christians to take the same path that leads to the life that accords with the will of God.[126] This last formulation "suffered in the flesh" was to become an essential doctrine in both the Eastern and the Western Churches.[127] From the Scriptural point of view it might be suggested that the God of the Old Testament had knowledge of humanity, for he was defined as an omnipotent being, but did not have experience of the fallen nature of man. If we accept that the distinction between knowledge of a certain thing or condition and its experience applies to God, we may understand why the Incarnation marked such a dramatic change in the way that God appears in the Old and New Testament respectively. More specifically with reference to his suffering, it seems that in the New Testament suffering represents the most important experience of Christ's Incarnation: the experience that showed God's

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[124] Heb. 5:7-9,"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

[125] I Pet. 2:21, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps..."

[126] I Pet. 4:1, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin..."

[127] A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition,From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451),* 2nd revised edition, vol. I, transl. by J. Bowden, London, 1975, 401ff. and 521.

love and compassion for mankind, while it gave to God the experience of human suffering through its endurance by Jesus.

For early Christian thinkers the issue of the suffering of God was not a simple one to deal with. The heritage of Greek philosophers who propounded the impassibility of God made the question even more challenging and complicated.[128] It seems that everybody, pagans and Christians alike, agreed that passibility is not a quality that can be attributed to God. But within the context of the incarnational theology of the Early Church the question proved to be more complicated than that.

Early apologists, such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus of Lyons, attributed impassibility to God, but the relation of the suffering of Christ with the Godhead and its implications do not seem to have been an issue for them.[129] Both writers often assert on the one hand the impassibility of God and on the other the suffering of Christ. Justin Martyr writes:

> "He thus revealed to us all that we have learned from the Scriptures by his grace, so that we know him as the first-begotten of God before all creatures, and as the son of the patriarchs, since he became incarnate by a virgin of their race, and condescended to become a man without

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[128] The pagan Celsus challenged Origen precisely on these grounds, namely that Christian revelation implies the passibility of God; Origen, *Contra Celsum,* 4.14-16.

[129] See for example, Justin, 1 *Apol.* 25.2; Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies* 2.21.4-2.23.

comeliness or honour, and subject to suffering. Hence, he alluded to his imminent suffering in this way..."[130]

The same idea is expressed in his first apology in which he states that in becoming man Christ endured suffering for our sake.[131] Origen generally asserts the impassibility of God; with reference to Christ he seems to be among the first thinkers who perceived the delicate nature of the paradox of the suffering of God. Hence, while affirming the impassibility of Christ he also affirms his Passion.[132] But even when he does not refer explicitly to the suffering of Christ, Origen understands the assumption of human nature by Christ as an acceptance of human suffering and death by God.[133] The suffering of God became an issue during the Arian debate over the natures of Christ in the sense that if the Logos is passible then he is not divine. Athanasius of Alexandria maintained that the incarnate

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[130] Justin, *Dial.* c.

[131] Justin, *I Apol.*, 50, 1, *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος παθεῖν ὑπέμεινε...*

[132] Origen, *Contra Celsum,* IV, 15; *ibid, Commentary in Matthew,* X, 23, *πέπονθεν ὁ ἀπαθὴς τῷ σπλαγχνισθῆναι...* (the text is published in PG 13, col. 836 ff. and in E. Klostermann and E. Benz, *Origenes Werke. Origenes Matthäuserklärung,* GCS 40, Berlin, 1935-1937.)

[133] Origen, *Contra Celsum,* III, 25, 35-38, "for the body born of the body of the virgin was made out of human matter and was capable of receiving human suffering and death."

Word of God suffered while remaining impassible.[134] According to Athanasius the suffering of Christ came as a result of the Incarnation.[135]

Christ not only experienced suffering in the Incarnation; he can be said also to have experienced hell itself. A text that treats the subject of the Descent of Christ into the Underworld, but not the suffering of Christ as such, is a hymn by Synesius of Cyrene (c.370-c.413).[136] Although not immediately relevant to theopaschism, the hymn of Synesius is interesting in that it employs images that were later adopted in Byzantine homilies and hymns dealing with the Passion of the Lord. Synesius was the author of a number of hymns that scholars consider were used for 'private devotion' rather than on liturgical occasions. Among the propounders of this view we may note Tomadakis and Mitsakis who in their studies of the early hymns of the Church noted the difference between the overtly

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[134] Athanasius, *Ep.Epict.* 6, "And it was strange that he was the one suffering and the one not suffering. Suffering, in that his body was suffering,...and not suffering in that the Logos being God by nature he is impassible..."; for the exegetical method of Athanasius and its importance in the Arian controversy see Young, *Biblical Exegesis,* 29-32.

[135] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi,* published in Ch. Kannengiesser, *Sur l'Incarnation du Verbe,* SC 199, Paris, 1973; as well as Athanasius' four orations, *Contra Arianos,* PG 26, cols. 12-525 and esp. 524 C, *Τὴν γὰρ προς τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἕνωσιν, συν ᾧ γνωρισθῆναι ἀνθρώποις ἦν δυνατον τὴν ἀόρατον φύσιν δια τῆς ὁρωμένης, ἀποστολην ὠνόμασεν...*

Ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐν σαρκὶ παρουσίας ἕνεκα την ἀποστολην οἱ δίκαιοι ὠνόμασαν....

[136] Synesius was bishop of Ptolemais. Of his numerous hymns only nine survive (C. Lacombrade, (ed.), *Hymnes,* Paris, 1978). The hymn in question is published also in the anthology of Byzantine poetry by R.Cantarella (*Poeti Bizantini,* vol. I, Milan, 1948, 34). For a study of the complicated issues involved in the life and career of Synesius see J. Vogt, *Begegnung mit Synesios, dem Philosophen, Priester und Feldherrn,* Dämstadt, 1985.

devotional-liturgical character of the anonymous hymns that survive in papyri and the hymns of Clement of Alexandria (d. c.215), Methodius of Olympus (d. 312), Gregory of Nazianzus (b. c.330) and Synesius of Cyrene (d.c.413) which were thought to fulfil a more 'private' dimension of Christian devotion.[137] Synesius in his hymn on the Descent of Christ into the Underworld does not refer either to the events preceding Good Friday or to the Crucifixion itself. Instead, he relates the Descent of Christ into the Underworld through a series of vivid images that derive from pagan imagery.[138] The Underworld is described as the place guarded

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[137] Compare for example the early anonymous hymn (Cantarella, *Poeti Bizantini,* 11-12) that is still used in the Orthodox Church with the first hymn by Synesius of Cyrene (Synesio di Cirene, *Inni,* A. dell'Era (ed.), Rome 1968, 33-91). Both hymns glorify the Holy Trinity, albeit in a completely different style that dictates a different response in the audience. Synesius was a student of the Neoplatonist philosopher Hypatia who was lynched at Alexandria by the Christian mob in the time of the patriarchate of Cyril of Alexandria (see below); Sokrates, *Ecclesiastical History,* 7.13 (*Sokrates Kirchengeschichte,* G.Ch. Hansen (ed.), Verlag, 1995, 360f.); J. Bregman, *Synesius of Cyrene, Philosopher-Bishop,* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1982, esp. 78-92 with regard to the Trinity in the hymnographic work of Synesius. See also N. Tomadakis, "Αἰσθητικὴ διαφοροποίησις θρησκευτικῆς καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ὑμνογραφίας," in *EEBS* 28, 1958, 65-89; *idem, Ἡ Βυζαντινὴ Ὑμνογραφία καὶ Ποίησις,* vol. 2, Thessaloniki, 1993 (henceforth cited as Tomadakis, *Byzantine Hymnography*); K.Mitsakis, *Ἡ Βυζαντινὴ Ὑμνογραφία,* vol. 1, Thessaloniki 1971, (henceforth cited as Mitsakis, *Byzantine Hymnography*). For a discussion of Methodius' *Symposium,* see Averil Cameron, *The Rhetoric of Empire,* 175-178. With reference to Gregory Nazianzen and the cultural transformation of Christianity in the fourth century, Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia,* 78-79.

[138] For the evolution of the personifications of Charon see M. Alexiou, "Modern Greek Folklore and its Relation to the Past: The Evolution of Charos in Greek Tradition," *The "Past" in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture,* S. Vryonis (ed.), California, 1978, 221-236.

by the serpent, the feeder of death,[139] as well as 'Tartara' -the ancient Greek name for the Underworld- while the mythical figures of Hades and Cerberus, the dog that guards the souls of the deceased from returning to earthly life, are mentioned in the poem.[140] Synesius refers to the Virgin with respect to the Incarnation,[141] but briefly, without dwelling on the subject.[142] Interestingly enough, he includes in his poem images of nature (stars and the moon) shown partaking in the unfolding of events.[143] Finally, it should be noted that the poem does not bear any resemblance either to the text of Melito or to the later Syriac hymns in that it lacks dramatic action, emotional appeal, and elaboration of the persons participating in the Passion. The choice of subject by Synesius remains interesting especially if we consider the fact that Christ's Descent into Hades became a popular subject much later.[144] Given the pagan elements echoed in the poetry of Synesius, it could be suggested that his choice of subject was dictated precisely by the familiar imagery of the Underworld that lent itself conveniently to the author for elaboration. This view is further supported by Synesius' inclusion of the mythical figures of Hades and Cerberus noted above. However, the suffering

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[139] χθόνιον μεγάλων ὄφιν, line 5; τροφον ἀργαλέου μόρου..., line 8.

[140] κατέβας δ'ὑπὸ Τάρταρα, line 16; Φρίξεν σε τότε / Ἅιδας ὁ παλαιγενής, lines 19-20; καὶ λαοβόρος κύων, line 21.

[141] γόνε παρθένου, line 2, παῖ παρθένου, line 11, παῖ παρθένου, line 29.

[142] Note the parallel with his first hymn (dell'Era, *Inni*,33-91) where, although he praises the Incarnation and the Nativity, he does not refer to the Virgin as the mother but to God as the Father of Christ.

[143] χορὸς ἄμβροτος ἀστέρων, line 35; αἰθηρ δε γελάσσας, line 36; ἀγεῖτο σελάνα, line 47.

[144] The Harrowing of Hell was used by homilists, hymnographers and iconographers alike, in order to denote the Resurrection of the Lord. See Kartsonis, *Anastasis*, 4-7.

of Christ would become a central issue in the fifth century, at the time of the Council of Ephesus.[145]

The Homily On the Pascha by Melito of Sardis

The earliest text that refers to the Passion of the Lord is the homily *On the Pascha* by Melito of Sardis.[146] Although the text does not include a lament of the Mother of God, it is still interesting for the researcher since it includes themes and images that throw light on the development of the lament. Melito was a prolific writer of the second century; his various works are listed by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History.*[147] Little is known about his life, apart from the fact

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[145] See below, chapter II.

[146] *Meliton of Sardis, Sur la Pâque,* O. Perler (ed.), SC 123, Paris 1966; *Meliton of Sardis: On Pascha and Fragments,* S.G. Hall (ed.), Oxford 1979.

[147] For the writings of Melito see E. Amann, 'Méliton de Sardes', *DThC,* vol. X, Paris 1928, cols. 540-547 and esp. 543-546; introduction by Perler, *op.cit.,* 11-15. Although Melito's theological views were in accordance with the later conciliar developments and he was also highly praised for his eloquence, his works did not survive and it is evident that he did not acquire a place in the pantheon of influential writers in Byzantium. The last direct reference to Melito is to be found in the seventh-century *Hodegos* of Anastasius Sinaites. Although Melito in his work propounds a balanced view of the divine and human natures of Christ, he is thought to have been responsible for a sect which believed that the human body was created in the image of God but not the human soul. R.C. White, "Melito of Sardis: Earliest Christian Orator," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 2, July 1967, 84, expressed the view that Melito's heterodoxy accounts for his exclusion from the corpus of influential writers. See also, A.M. Manis, "Meliton of Sardis: Hermeneutic and Context," *GrOrthThRev* 32, No. 4, 1987, 389.

that he was bishop of Sardis in the middle of the second century.[148] Melito, was among the leading figures of the Quartodecimans, who believed that Easter should be celebrated on the 14th of the month Nisan, that is at the same time as the Jewish Passover. The practice was associated with the identification of Christ with the paschal lamb in John 6.[149] According to its French editor, the homily *On the Pascha* was written some time between 160 and 170[150] and could have been

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[148] The evidence we possess about Melito, and especially Tertullian's attitude towards Melito, suggests that he fought against the rising heresy of Montanists in Asia Minor. See W.H.C. Frend, "Montanism: Research and Problems," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa,* XXX, Florence, 1984, 521-537. He also played an active part in the debate over the date of the celebration of Easter (for which see below). Méliton de Sardes, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique,* vol. VIII, Paris, 1928, cols. 542-543; A.T. Kraabel, "Melito the Bishop and the Synagogue at Sardis: Text and Context," in D.G. Mitten et.al. (eds.), *Studies Presented to George M.A. Hanfmann,* Cambridge, 1971, 77-85. Kraabel relates the material that was brought to light during Hanfmann's excavations of 1962 at Sardis, i.e., a large and prosperous synagogue, to the text of Melito in an effort to reconstruct his 'social location'. More recently Andrew Manis reconsidered the hypothesis of Kraabel and related the existence of the Synagogue (which in its turn implies the existence of a large and powerful Jewish community) to the anti-Jewish character of the text. See Manis, "Meliton of Sardis: Hermeneutic and Context," 387-401. Cf. W.H.C. Frend, "Early Christianity and Society: a Jewish Legacy in the Pre-Constantinian Era," *Harvard Theological Review* 76, 1983, 53-71.

[149] E.J. Kilmartin, "Liturgical Influence of John 6," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 22, 1960, 183-191; Cross, *The Early Christian Fathers,* 101. The author suggests that the celebration of Easter as a development of the Jewish Passover was already established in the first century. See also the discussion by Manis, "Meliton of Sardis: Hermeneutic and Context," 390. For the transformation of the *Pascha,* see also G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* London, 1945, 348 ff.

[150] Perler, *op.cit.,* 24.

part of the ceremony of baptism that was performed on Good Friday.[151] The homily is a typological interpretation of Easter with reference to Jewish Passover.[152]

Scholars have expressed different opinions about the question whether the text should be read as a whole or as two distinct texts. Hall detects two parts in the homily: the first (11-45) being an indirect reference to the Jewish Passover and the second (46-105) a Passover Haggadah. The division is self-evident and also accepted by Cross and Manis.[153] However, the last two authors read the text as a single entity. Manis in particular emphasizes correctly that it is in the second part that the typological significance of Jewish Passover is developed. He thus proposes the reading of the text as a single entity. On the other hand, Hall bases his argument on the Georgian translations of the text; the two separate parts of this homily were treated by different editors and at different times. In addition to that, Eusebius in the catalogue of Melito's works lists two works on Easter

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[151] Perler, *op.cit.,* 24-29. At the time of Melito the celebration of Easter was a single feast and so 'Good Friday' did not exist in the way that it developed in later centuries; however, the association of Easter with baptism must have existed at the time. Cross considers the identification of the text as a 'homily on Good Friday' an anachronisation given the early date of the work and suggests that even in terms of style it bears more similarities to a Passover Haggadah. See also, Manis, "Meliton of Sardis: Hermeneutic and Context," 391; S. Hall, "Meliton in the Light of the Passover Haggadah," *JThS* 22, 1971, 29-46.

[152] The first part of the homily, after the introduction (1-10), is dedicated to the typological interpretation of Jewish Passover: the blood of the lamb that protected Israel is seen as a prefiguration of the salvation of mankind by the blood of Christ.

[153] Hall, "Meliton in the Light of the Passover Haggadah," 29-46; Cross, *Early Christian Fathers,* 104-105; Manis, "Meliton of Sardis: Hermeneutic and Context," 391-392.

(meaning perhaps the two 'parts' of the homily).[154] Taking into consideration the arguments on both sides, I would like to suggest a third possible explanation.

It is certain that the homily is divided into two parts, as suggested by the above mentioned scholars. The second part is introduced with the lines 324-327: "You have heard the explanation of the prefiguration and of its relation; listen in the same manner to the structure of the mystery. What is Easter? It is from what happened that the mystery took its name; The 'paschein' from the 'pathein'..." These opening lines separate clearly the first from the second part and reintroduce the subject. Melito was admittedly a very capable rhetor: would he need to introduce the second part of his homily in such an explicit way? In addition, the first part focuses on the suffering of Israel, whereas the second on the suffering of the Lord; but the end of the second part is imbued with the triumphant tone of the Resurrection despite the fact that at the time Easter was celebrated as a commemoration of the Crucifixion, rather than of the Resurrection. The homily ends with an assertion of Christ as the true Son of God and of his Resurrection (100-105). Although Easter was celebrated as a single feast, could it not have been that Melito delivered the first part of his homily on the eve of the feast-day to prepare his congregation for the feast itself, and preached the second on the day of Easter?[155]

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[154] Hall, "Meliton in the Light of the Passover Haggadah," 39-45.

[155] C. Chevalier, "Les Trilogies homilétiques dans l'élaboration des fêtes Mariales, 650-850," *Gregorianum* 18, 1937, 361-378. Although the study by Chevalier refers to a later period, I think that it could well be applied to this earlier phase of the development of homiletics.

But let us return to the text and to the themes that will be encountered later in the lament of the Virgin. In the second part of the homily, which is of more interest to the study of the lament, Jesus remains at the centre of the narration. He is referred to as the lamb (*ἀμνός*), while his mother shares the typology, being referred to as the ewe (*ἀμναϛ*).[156] The elaboration of his person, work and Passion refers constantly to the framework of the salvatory plan of God in which the Logos fully participated from the very creation of the world and will participate until the end of time.[157] The person of Christ is affirmed in the epilogue where Jesus asserts that it is he who delivered the condemned, resurrected the dead, destroyed death, triumphed over the enemy, etc.[158] The paradox of the salvatory mystery forms a considerable part of the pattern upon which narration is built. More specifically, the themes of the lament that can be traced back to the homily *On the Pascha* are the following:

I. Anti-Jewish polemic,

II. Antithetical imagery (light-darkness, slavery-freedom, life-death), and

III. Compassion of nature.

In his study of the *Paschal Homily,* Manis suggests that Melito is ambivalent towards Judaism.[159] His understanding of anti-Jewish polemic is to a great extent historical and the presence of the Jews in the text is explained in terms of real situations, i.e. the existence of a large Jewish community at Sardis.

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[156] The Johannine repercussions of the imagery of the lamb have been noted above.

[157] Melito of Sardis, *On the Pascha,* ed. Perler, verses 328-533, verses 651-679.

[158] *ibid*, verses 775-786; see also verses 790-800.

[159] Manis, "Meliton of Sardis: Hermeneutic and Context," 398.

Given the early date of the *Paschal Homily* we cannot yet refer to anti-Jewish polemic as a topos of Christian literature, but we could still propose an explanation based on the theological preoccupations of early Christian writers.[160] Melito in his effort to establish the line of continuity between the Old and the New Testament, is at the same time obliged to distance himself from this tradition, which was at once completed and thoroughly renewed by the Incarnation of the Word of God. The paschal mystery is hence described as *old* in regard to its prefigurations, but *new* in regard to grace.[161]

On the other hand, the Jews -once the elect and now the rejected people of God- offer an opportunity for the writer to elaborate an antithetical pattern comprising what has once been and what is no more. The contrast of past and present with reference to Israel implements a reading of the text as a lament, a lament not for Christ but for Israel.

At the same time Israel offers an opportunity for the author to employ another typical theme of the lament: the injustice associated with death. In the case of the Crucifixion the injustice is manifested in an extreme way and is sharply contrasted to the healing miracles of Christ. This theme would become a standard feature of subsequent laments; its fully expanded form is to be found in the laments of the ninth century as well as in the *idiomela troparia* included in the

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[160] See M. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity. A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus,* Leiden-New York-Köln, 1995.

[161] Melito of Sardis, *On the Pascha,* ed. Perler, verses 423-425: *Ἐστιν γαρ παλαιον και καινον το τοῦ κυρίου μυστήριον, παλαιον μεν κατα τὸν τύπον, καινον δε κατα την χάριν.*

service of Good Friday.[162] A feature that was not taken up by subsequent authors but which added vividness to the text of Melito is the contrast between the suffering of Christ and the joy of the Jews who celebrate the Passover.[163] Anti-Jewish polemic, in relation to the lament, is perhaps the most standard feature of all subsequent homilies and hymns on the Crucifixion.

The antithetical pattern that we saw with reference to anti-Jewish polemic is also encountered on a wider scale in the imagery of the *Paschal Homily.* In the text light is contrasted with darkness, life with death, sin with adoption and participation in the kingdom of God, slavery with freedom, and the miracles of the benefactor with the murder of the malefactors. Generally, antithetical patterns operate concurrently in terms of content and of imagery.

In terms of content the Jews form a separate category: their murder of Jesus is contrasted with his healing miracles and especially in the text of Melito the formerly privileged state of Israel is contrasted with the murder of God.[164] Also, with reference to the Jews, the subject of ingratitude is developed and expressed in antithetical phrases. In much the same way the broader category of mankind is brought into the picture: its former state of enslavement to death is contrasted with the salvation of mankind obtained through the sacrifice of the innocent lamb. Death is associated with sin and darkness, with tyranny and

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[162] S.Janeras, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la tradition liturgique Byzantine, structure et histoire de ses offices,* (Studia Anselmiana 99 - Analecta Liturgica 12), Rome 1988; for the manuscripts of the troparia see 237-238; texts in 238-248.

[163] Melito of Sardis, *On the Pascha,*ed. Perler, verses 571-595.

[164] *Ibid,* verses 731-737, *Ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ ἀνῄρεται ὑπο δεξιᾶς Ἰσραηλίτιδος.*

captivity. The other part of the antithetical pattern is expressed in terms of light, life, freedom and eternity. [165]

Also inspiring for the author is the contrast between the greatness of the Creator and the meanness of his creature who leads him to his voluntary slaughter. It is at this point that nature plays an important part, being identified with the people who in the Biblical laments are called upon to share the grieving for the deceased.[166] Nature is called upon to witness the mystery and functions like the chorus in ancient Greek tragedies. In subsequent laments we shall see the Mother of God herself calling upon nature to share her mourning. In this early text emphasis is given to nature in the context of the antithesis Creator-creature, that is, the life-giver, God, who is put to death by his own creation, man.[167] The giver of light is crucified, and the day becomes dark to hide his naked body while the sun and the stars turn their faces away to avoid the fearful sight. The motif of nature is encountered equally in hymnography and homiletics and in the iconography of the Crucifixion.[168]

Conclusion

The cult and the lament of the Mother of God in Byzantium are greatly indebted to both the Hellenistic and -most importantly- the Jewish background to

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[165] *Ibid*, verses 489-495.

[166] *Ibid*, verses 711-752.

[167] *Ibid*, verses 731-743; note the close parallel of verses 731-735 with the twelfth idiomelon in Janeras, *Vendredi-Saint,* 247.

[168] See below chapters IV and V.

which early Christian writers had recourse in their effort to shape the new faith. Byzantine writers of the early Christian centuries freely employed Hellenistic rhetoric as a means of expression, but the development of the cult and the lament of the Virgin may not be explained solely on these grounds, namely, as a literary theme. Marian laments echo the theological elaboration of Christian revelation. More specifically, the lament of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross finds its inspiration in the laments of the Old Testament, whether for people or for cities. Biblical laments comprise all the basic elements that were to be used during the following centuries by Byzantine hymnographers and homilists in their composition of the lament of the Virgin.

The evolution of the cult of the Virgin during the first Christian centuries is linked with the development of the typological imagery that proved the Virgin to be the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. By drawing upon images in the Old Testament, writers of the early Byzantine period made up for the scarcity of references to the Virgin in the New Testament. However, the lament of the Virgin is inextricably linked to the theme of the suffering of God. In the Old Testament God reveals himself in anthropomorphic terms such as anger or jealousy, while in the New Testament the Incarnation of the Word is emphasized by concentration upon his suffering.

The *Paschal Homily* by Melito of Sardis reflects the typological concerns of the author's day and can be read as a precursor of the hymnography of the

Passion that emerged in ensuing centuries.[169] The roots of Christian hymnography, which inherited the long Jewish and Graeco-Roman tradition of psalms and odes respectively, are conventionally placed in Syria.[170] The dominant themes of the lament, that is, anti-Jewish polemic, antithetical imagery, and the compassion of nature, are all included in Melito's homily, perhaps the earliest surviving work concerned with the Passion of the Lord. However, the Mother of God is only briefly mentioned. In the homily by Melito, as well as in other early Christian writings, the Virgin is always associated with Old Testament prophecies. The fully-developed lament of Mary was not to appear sooner than the fifth century, at the time of the Council of Ephesus. As we shall see in the following chapter, the Marian lament reflected the growth of the cult of the Virgin that was at the centre of the Nestorian controversy.

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[169] P. Christou, "Τό ἔργον τοῦ Μελίτωνος *Περι Πάσχα* καί ἡ Ἀκολουθία τοῦ Πάθους," *Κληρονομία* 1, τεῦχος A, 1969, 65-78 and esp. 66; Mitsakis, *Byzantine Hymnography,* 48-49; E.Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography,* Oxford 1961, 185-186.

[170] Mitsakis, *Byzantine Hymnography,* 40-41. From its outset Christian hymnography had a catechetical character: it was the medium that appealed most strongly to the people. See M.Lauzière, "Les Théotokies Coptes," *EO* XXXIX, nos 199-200, 1941-1942, 312-327 and esp. 313.

CHAPTER II

THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS AND THE FIRST LAMENTS OF MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

Introduction

The centuries preceding the Council of Ephesus (431) witnessed the early growth of the cult of the Virgin Mary, who gradually became a symbol of Orthodoxy, the true dogma of the Church. In this chapter I will try to give a concise account of the developments that led to the Council of Ephesus and to the ratification of the term Theotokos in order to explain the rise of the Virgin's lament during the fifth and sixth centuries. The growing cult of Mary and the manner in which she was viewed by the Fathers of the Church gave rise to the first Christian laments, which originated in the Christian East. In hymnography, the Syriac tradition is best represented by Ephrem the Syrian and Romanos the Melode, though the latter lived and composed his works in Constantinople.[171] The prolific Romanos was the author of the hymn *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*,[172] a text that is central to the study of the lament since it represents the earliest fully developed example of Mary's lament. His work reflects both the

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[171] The appreciation Romanos met with in Byzantium is testified by his recognition as a saint by the Church, which celebrates his memory on October 1st. For the cult of Romanos in the Greek and Armenian Church, see R. Bousquet, "Le culte de saint Romane le Mélode dans l'église grecque et l'église arménienne," *EO* 3, 1899-1900, 339-42; H. Delehaye, "Saint Romanos le Mélode," *AB* 13, 1894, 440-442.

[172] Romanos the Melode, *Hymnes,* J. Grosdidier de Matons (ed.), vol. IV, SC 128, Paris, 1967, 160-184.

course of the cult of Mary and its significance particularly in the fifth century. However, it has to be emphasized that Marian devotion has always been linked to Christology. This was also the case in the Council of Ephesus where the epithet 'Theotokos' became symbolic of the debate whose true subject was the way in which the two natures of the Word coexisted within the historical person of Jesus. As we shall see, the other central issue of the debate was the age-old question about the impassibility of God. The impassibility of God was not a new theme brought to the fore by Christian thinkers. Greek philosophers refer repeatedly to suffering in connexion with the divine; they associate suffering with emotion and hence consider both emotion and suffering as feelings exclusive to human beings, for if they affected also divinities the latter would lack rational control. Pre-Socratics such as Anaxagoras and Democritus as well as Plato and Aristotle refer to the notion of *ἀπάθεια*. In his third book of the *Republic,* in which he deals with death, Plato states that poets should not write on the subject of death and Hades because in doing so they discourage young men from being brave at war (3.387a-c). By the same token, Plato banishes laments from his ideal city suggesting that they should be the task of lowly women so that men might not be tempted to imitate them (3.387e-388a). And if laments are not fit for humans how much less so for immortals; thus, Plato concludes, neither grief nor laughter should be attributed to the divine (3.388). The same strand of thought is followed by Aristotle who used the word *πάσχω* in its sense of suffering, that is, being subject to motion. The original source of motion, i.e. of energy, was understood to be the divine, in other words, the divine was the very origin of the creation of the

universe. Motion is associated with mutability, a process passing from non-being to being; hence, change and birth are closely associated. In his study of the soul, Aristotle refers to the intellect as one of the five capacities of the soul.[173] The intellect is the only 'force' that is not associated with matter. Aristotle attributes to it practical, theoretical and poetic functions. Practical intellect pursues 'good living' (*εὐταξία - εὐδαιμονία*) in politics and life, whereas the poetic intellect pursues expression through art. Theoretical intellect is the one relevant to our subject and Aristotle ascribes to it the study of the universe (*θεολογία*), the research of natural laws as expressed in physics, and the study of mathematics. When he says that the divine is *ἀπαθὲς καὶ ἀναλλοίωτον*, i.e. impassible and immutable, he means that it is not set in motion by any other being. Hence the divine is in a state of beatitude and does not experience emotion.[174] This theory was taken up by the Stoics and subsequently by Neoplatonists who thought of impassibility as an ethical ideal.[175]

In Byzantium, the term 'theopaschism' was normally used to designate the heresy that developed as a branch of monophysitism after the Councils of

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[173] The other four being the following: *θρεπτικὴ, αἰσθητικὴ, ὀρεκτικὴ, κατὰ τόπον κίνησιν*.

[174] *Metaph.* 12, 7.13-1073 A.11; *On the Soul* I, 405 b.20 with reference to the earlier theory of Anaxagoras, "the only one to hold that intelligence is impassible and that it has nothing in common with anything else"; I, 408b.25-29; III, 430a 18; Cf. N.C. Angelis, *Être et justice chez Aristote,* Doctorat d'État, Sorbonne II, Paris 1989, (forthcoming - Athens 1998).

[175] M. Dragona-Monachou, *The Stoic Arguments for the Existence and the Providence of the Gods,* Athens, 1976, 131-156 and *passim.*

Ephesus I, II and the Council of Chalcedon.[176] The doctrine that referred to the suffering of God was endorsed in 553 (at the Council of Constantinople II that was held during the reign of Justinian) but without producing any positive results as far as the schism between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians was concerned. The theological theme of theopaschism was inextricably linked to the Christological issues discussed at the Council of Ephesus and it was in this way that it became a catch-word during the fifth century. The theological issue of theopaschism was expressed and conveyed to the congregations through the lament of Mary in which Christ's suffering on the Cross was asserted along with the proclamation of his two natures, human and divine. Hence, the rise of the lament will be explained firstly, on the basis of the growing cult of Mary and, secondly, in relation to the question of the impassibility of God.

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[176] According to T. Gregory (s.v. "Theopaschitism," *ODB,* vol. 3, 2060), Theopaschitism was first propounded in Constantinople by four Scythian monks as a solution to the breach between Chalcedonians and Monophysites. See E. Amann, "Théopaschite (Controverse)," *DThC* 15, 1946, 505-512. Amann gives a concise account of the issue before 553 and also draws attention to the importance to the addition of the words 'who was crucified for us', of the introduction of the *trisagion* hymn (holy God, holy Mighty, holy Immortal) the addition made by the patriarch of Antioch, Peter the Fuller (d.488) (Amann, *op.cit.,* 506). In the present study Theopaschism is used in the context not only of the sixth-century debate, but also of the first usages of the theopaschite formula. For the hymn see G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* London, 1945, 451-452. Finally, for a discussion of theopaschism in the *Hodegos* of Anastasius Sinaites in the seventh century, see A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis, The Making of an Image,* Princeton, New Jersey, 1986; *eadem,* "The Emancipation of the Crucifixion," *Byzance et les Images,* Paris, 1994, 151-187, and esp. 174-178 and Averil Cameron, "The Language of Images: The Rise of Icons and Christian Representation," *The Church and the Arts,* D. Wood (ed.), Oxford, 1992, 1-42.

The Feasts of the Virgin and Apocryphal Literature

Feasts of the Virgin were introduced gradually into the official calendar of the Church during the early Byzantine period. Some of them derive from the Gospels while others derive from apocryphal literature. The consolidation of these developments, however, did not occur before the sixth century, or even later. Since there was not enough detail concerning the Mother of God in the Gospels, the writers of the early Byzantine period made good the deficiency by drawing upon apocryphal literature that was produced during the early Christian centuries.[177] The official Church never formally condemned apocryphal literature, but neither did it accept it as fully canonical. Feasts associated with the Mother of God, such as the Conception of St Anne, the Birth of the Theotokos and the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple were adopted by the Church even though their origins lay in apocryphal literature. However, according to Nellas, the feast of the Dormition,[178] that is also found in apocryphal literature, should be

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[177] The main body of apocryphal literature was written between the second and the fifth century, although Byzantine writers continued to produce apocryphal texts until the fifteenth century.In particular for the the *Acta Pilati* B, in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, see below. For the function of apocryphal literature within the context of the literary production of Late Antiquity, see Averil Cameron, *The Rhetoric of Empire,* 90 and, with reference to the Theotokos, 98-106.

[178] On the Dormition see the classic studies by M. Jugie, *La mort et l'assomption de la Sainte Vierge,* Studi e Testi 114, Vatican 1944; A. Wenger, *L'assomption de la Très Sainte Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VIe au Xe siècle,* Archives de l'orient chrétien 5, Paris, 1955; M. Van Esbroeck, "Les textes littéraires sur l'Assomption avant le Xe siècle," *Les Actes Apocryphes des Apôtres. Christianisme et monde païen,* F. Bovon (et.al.) (eds.), Geneva, 1981.

considered a development of the feast of St Mary (Αγία Μαρία) celebrated in Jerusalem at least until the fifth century, and should therefore be disassociated from its apocryphal sources.[179] Coptic representations of the Virgin dating from the fourth and fifth centuries bear inscriptions which describe the Virgin as 'St. Mary' (Αγία Μαρία). The title 'Saint' was subsequently replaced by the superlative 'All-Holy' (Παναγία - Υπεραγία),[180] found in representations dating after the fifth century.[181]

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[179] The feast of the Dormition was introduced as an official feast at the time of the emperor Maurice; see the Introduction by Nellas (ed.), in Nicholas Cabasilas, *Theometor*, 27. For the development of the feast, see the Introduction by M. Jugie, *Homélies Mariales Byzantines, Textes grecs édités et traduits en latin*, PO 19, cols. 289-438; *idem*, "La première fête mariale en Orient et en Occident, l'Avent Primitif," *EO* 22, 1923, 129-152; Averil Cameron, "A Nativity Poem of the Sixth Century A.D.," *Classical Philology* 79, 1979, 222-232 and esp. 230 and *n.*50; *eadem*, "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: A City Finds its Symbol," *JThS* XXIX, 1978, 79-108; M. Van Esbroeck, "Le culte de la Vierge de Jérusalem à Constantinople aux 6e-7e siècles," *REB* 46, 1988, 181-190.

[180] D. Kalokyris, *Ἡ Θεοτόκος εἰς τήν εἰκονογραφίαν Ἀνατολῆς καὶ Δύσεως*, Thessalonica, 1972, 25. Kalokyris suggests that the change in the epithets applied to the Mother of God came about as a result of theological discussions on Christology and that this was a way of acknowledging Mary's role in the Incarnation; Cameron, "A Nativity Poem," 222-232.

[181] Note, however, representations dating to the sixth century, such as in the woollen tapestry of the Cleveland Museum that bears the inscription 'St Mary'. For the relevant panel see Averil Cameron, "The Language of Images," plate 3. On the development of the feasts and the iconography of Mary see C.E. Barber, *Image and Cult. Studies in the Representation of the Virgin Mary in Early Medieval Art*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1989, 234 and *passim*; see also the older study by G. Sotiriou, "Ἡ χριστιανικη και Βυζαντινη εικονογραφία. Ἡ Εικων τῆς Θεοτόκου," in *Θεολογία* ΚΖ', 1956, 5-18. Sotiriou discusses the heresies of the Collyridians and the

The Catholic scholar Martin Jugie tackled the question of the development of the feasts of the Virgin in the East.[182] Before the Council of Ephesus there had been a Marian feast that bore some similarity to the later feast of the Annunciation. This is evident in the homily on the Annunciation by Abraham of Ephesus in which it is recorded that the feast of the 25th March did not come into existence before the time of the emperor Justinian (527-565), as well as in a hagiographical work by Theodore of Petra who wrote the Life of Saint Theodosius the Coenobiarch soon after the death of the saint in 529. In this *Vita*, Theodore records a miracle performed by the saint on the day of the feast of the Virgin when pilgrims crowded the monastery and there was no food to give them Theodosius, Theodore relates, multiplied the bread. The hagiographer wrote: "περίοδον ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ τῆς Θεοτόκου μνήμην ἐπιτελοῦμεν", that is, "once

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Antidicomarianites mentioned by Epiphanius (b. c. 315- d. 403) in his *Panarion* (Transl. by F.Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book II & III,[Secta 47-80, De Fide]*,Leiden-New York, 1987, 601-620 and 620-629). Sotiriou considers that the idealised figure of Mary as a female virgin goddess sprung out of the Hellenic background of Christianity, whereas the human Mary from its Jewish background. He also suggests that the iconography of the Virgin can be distinguished by two phases, the first prior to the Council of Ephesus and the second afterwards. In the first phase the rare depictions of the Virgin present her holding the Christ Child, sometimes even breast-feeding, as in the catacomb of S. Callistos in Rome, or in a position of intercession, as in the bottom of glass bowls also found in the catacombs of Rome (see figs. 1 and 2 in Sotiriou). The Virgin in the position of *deesis* is often flanked by the Apostles Peter and Paul and bears the inscription 'Ἁγία Μαρία'. To the second phase Sotiriou ascribes all the other known types of the Virgin (Hodegetria, Tes Peges, etc).

[182] Jugie, PO 19, cols. 289-438. The homilies edited and translated by Jugie are those of Theodotus of Ancyra and Chrysippus of Jerusalem.

a year, according to the liturgical year, we celebrate the memory of Theotokos". The exact date of the introduction of the feast has not yet been definitely determined even so it is generally accepted that it was some time during December, either the Sunday before Christmas or the day after the feast, the 26th of the month. On her feast day the Virgin is commemorated as a saint, the title of many of the early sermons being "μνήμη τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας".[183] It seems that initially the Virgin, the Theotokos, was celebrated only once a year at a time significantly close to the Nativity. The development of the feast shows that the figure of Mary attracted the attention of early Christian writers because of her role in the Incarnation.[184] The close association of the feast of Mary with the Nativity

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[183] Early representations of the Virgin bear the same inscription; see K. Weitzmann, "The Jephthah Panel in the Bema of the Church of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai," *Studies in the Arts at Sinai,* Princeton, New Jersey, 1982, 63-80 and esp. 67-69.

[184] J. Vereecken ("L'Hymne Acathiste: icône chantée et mystère de l'Incarnation en nombres," *B* LXIII, 1993, 357-387 and esp. 359-360) posits that the content of the Akathist Hymn that is still sung today during the vigil of the feast of the Annunciation (on Saturday in the fifth week of Lent) indicates that the hymn could have been composed for the feast of the Incarnation ("pour la fête générale de l'Incarnation"). For the hymn and the circumstances of its composition see also the earlier study by E. Wellesz ("The 'Akathistos'. A Study in Byzantine Hymnography," *DOP* 9-10, 1955-1956, 143-174) and the more recent studies by E.Voordeckers (*Verheug U Bruid, Altijd-Maagd. De Akathistohymne van de Byzantijnse Kerk,* Bonheiden, 1988) who discusses previous bibliography on the subject and L.M. Peltomaa, "The *Tomus ad Armenios de Fide* of Proclus of Constantinople and the Christological Emphasis of the *Akathistos* Hymn," *JÖB* 47, 1997, 25-37 where the author places the Akathist within the context of the Christological developments of the fifth and sixth centuries and considers the hymn as expressive of the Alexandrian Christology of the Logos-*sarx.* For the iconography of the Akathist see N. K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting,* Leiden, 1986, 93-103.

is echoed in some of the archaic hymns of the Church.[185] It was only gradually that the other Marian feasts took hold. The feast of the Annunciation, for instance, must have been introduced after the Council of Ephesus; according to Fletcher, its celebration in Constantinople on the 25th March was introduced during the reign of Justinian. [186]

In subsequent centuries the Annunciation and the Nativity were to be associated with the Deposition from the Cross by both homilists and iconographers, a vivid juxtaposition being made between the Mother of God holding Christ first as an infant and then as a dead young man, the paschal lamb.[187] Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne examines art-historical evidence in

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[185] C. Trypanis, "An Anonymous Early Byzantine Kontakion on the Virgin Mary," *BZ* 58, 1965, 327-331; C. Wessely, "Les plus anciens monuments du christianisme écrits sur papyrus," PO 18, Paris, 1924, cols. 424-450 (repr. Turnhout, Belgique, 1985); K.Mitsakis, *Byzantine Hymnography,* 53, 62-63.

[186] See A.R. Fletcher, "Three Early Byzantine Hymns and their Place in the Liturgy of the Church of Constantinople," *BZ* 51, 1958, 53-65 and esp. 58 ff.; Trypanis, "An Anonymous Early Byzantine Kontakion," 327-331; Trypanis relates the 'Hail' form of the Akathistos to the 'Hail' of the Annunciation and thus dates both the introduction of the feast of the Annunciation and the composition of the hymn to the sixth century; Cameron, "A Nativity Poem ," 228-229 in which the author discusses the relationship between the Nativity and iconography, as well as the literary aspect of the subject. According to Cameron, the poem reflects the development of the dogma of the Virgin; both parts of the poem (the first focused on the Virgin and the second on the Child) lay emphasis on the theological implications of the Incarnation.

[187] H.Maguire, "Truth and Convention in Byzantine Works of Art," *DOP* 28, 1974, 113-140; *idem, Art and Eloquence,* 97-100. Cf., Barber, *Image and Cult,* 42-52, 121-123 and *passim.* Barber makes some pertinent art-historical remarks about the feasts of the Virgin. However, the author goes further in associating each feast with the development of a distinct characteristic of the Virgin. He considers that the Birth of the Virgin

connexion with apocryphal texts and suggests that the Birth of Mary was first celebrated in the early part of the seventh century, her Presentation in the Temple from the first half of the eighth, and the Conception from the end of the eighth or beginning of the ninth century.[188]

The early life of the Virgin, about which nothing at all is said in the Gospels, is related in *The Book of James,* known as the Protevangelium of James[189] which was written in Egypt. The date proposed for its composition is the very end of the second century.[190] This text, attributed to James, the "brother of

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represents the promise of a changed world, the Hypapante her womanhood, the Annunciation her role in Orthodoxy and the Koimesis her part as an intercessor. I have been unable to establish the theological grounds upon which such arbitrary correspondences are based.

[188] J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Iconography of the Cycle of the Life of the Virgin," in P. Underwood, *Kariye Djami, Studies in the Art of the Kariye Djami and its Intellectual Background,* London, 1975, 163-194 and esp. 164. For discussion of the development of Marian feasts see also Averil Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople," 79-108.

[189] K.von Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha,* Leipzig, 1876, repr. Hildesheim, 1987, 1-50; standard English edition and translation by M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament,* Oxford, 1924. More recent editions: *Protevangelium of James,* in W. Barnstone (ed.), *The Other Bible,* San Francisco, 1980; E. Henneke and W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha,* vol. I, Philadelphia, 1963; see also a less standard collection of apocryphal writings in J. Pelikan, *Christianity: The Apocrypha and the New Testament,* New York, 1989, which does not include the Protevangelium of James. All references in the present study are to the edition by von Tischendorf, unless otherwise stated.

[190] The text survives in a fourth-century papyrus (Bodmer V), to which Bodmer gave the title *Gennesis Marias.* See A. Kazhdan and A. Weyl Carr, s.v. "Protoevangelion of James," *ODB,* vol. 3, 1744-1745. E. de Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du*

the Lord" (*adelphotheos*) who became the first bishop of Jerusalem, relates the birth of the Virgin to the barren Joachim and Anna, as well as her Presentation in the Temple by her parents at the age of three. According to the text, Mary remained cloistered in the Temple until the age of twelve. Her life in the Holy of Holies is described with a great deal of lyricism that is echoed in inspired works that drew upon apocryphal literature for their material.[191] The motifs of this early Christian literature were employed by hymnographers, homilists and artists throughout the Byzantine period as a permanent source of inspiration.[192]

In the apocryphal *Acta Pilati*, a text that forms part of the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, Mary's virginity is defended even by a group of pious Jews who disagree with the accusations made by their archpriests who maintain that Jesus was the offspring of an unlawful relationship.[193] The *Gospel of Nicodemus*

Protévangile de Jacques: Recherches sur le Papyrus Bodmer 5, SubsHag 33, Brussels, 1961.

[191] For the iconographic themes inspired by the Protevangelium of James see Kazhdan-Weyl Carr, *op.cit.,* 1745. With special reference to the Marian cycle mosaics of Chora monastery in Constantinople see Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Iconography of the Cycle of the Life of the Virgin," 163-194. A wider view is expressed in the two-volume study by the same author (*eadem, Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident,* 2 vols., Brussels, 1964-1965).

[192] For recourse to apocryphal writings as models for artistic representation see H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium,* Princeton, New Jersey, 1981; R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold. Byzantine Society and its Icons,* London, 1985,167-169; Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Iconography of the Cycle of the Life of the Virgin," 163-194; *eadem, Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge,* vol. I, *passim.*

[193] *Acta Pilati* A, cap. II, in Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha,* 224-228. According to the text, the Jews that did not accept that Jesus was the fruit of *porneia* were twelve (the number of the disciples of Jesus).Elsewhere, the text emphasizes the presence of Jews

consists of two parts, the *Acta Pilati* and *Christ's Descent into Hell.* The first is dated to the fourth century, the second to the fifth or early sixth century.[194] The virgin birth is confirmed by the words of Symeon the prophet, but at the same time it is qualified by the pain of the sword that will pierce the heart of the Virgin.[195] To the *Acta Pilati* we owe the names of the two thieves that were crucified with Christ, Δυσμᾶς and Γέστας, who were included in early representations of the Crucifixion.[196] The lament of the Virgin in the *Gospel of*

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who believed in Christ and defended him citing his healing miracles, as for example in cap. VI, VII and VII, 237-240.

[194] G.C. Ceallaigh, "Dating the Commentaries of Nicodemus," *HThR* 56, 1963, 21-58. See also W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen,* vol. I, Tübingen, 1987, 395-424.

[195] *Acta Pilati* A, cap. XVI.2, 276. The prophecy about the sword that would pierce Mary's heart originates in the New Testament (Luke 2:35, "and a sword will pierce through your own soul also"); it was not interpreted in the same way by all the Eastern Fathers. Ephrem the Syrian in his commentary on Jn 20:11-17 and other early Christian authors interpret the sword as an image of the doubt they considered Mary might have felt at the Crucifixion about Christ's divinity, whereas later writers saw it exclusively as a prophecy of the pain. See D.I. Pallas, *Die Passion und Bestattung Christi in Byzanz. Der Ritus, das Bild,* Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia, 2, Munich, 1965, 174 ff. As an example of these later writers, see the elaborate treatment of the subject by George of Nicomedia in the ninth century, originally published as a homily of Athanasius, *Homilia in Occursum Domini*, PG 28, cols. 973-1000, and attributed correctly to George by H. Maguire, "The Iconography of Symeon with the Christ Child in Byzantine Art," *DOP* 34-35, 1980-1981, 261-269 and esp. 264 ff.

[196] See for example, the eighth-century icon of the Crucifixion from Mount Sinai (tempera on wood), published in G. and M. Sotiriou, *Icones du Mont Sinaï,* vol. I, Athens 1956, fig. 25 and discussed by K. Weitzmann, "*Loca Sancta* and the Representational Arts of Palestine," *Studies in the Arts at Sinai,* Princeton, New Jersey, 1982, 19-62, and esp. 26 ff. In the Sinai icon the thief on the right is named as Demas

Nicodemus does not occupy more than a few lines.[197] John, the beloved disciple, plays an important role in the *Gospel of Nicodemus,* informing the Virgin about the trial and the Crucifixion of the Lord and accompanying her to Golgotha together with Martha, Mary Magdalen, Salome and other virgins.[198] Also noteworthy is the way in which the Virgin addresses Christ as her son and her Lord, reflected in the *kontakion* of Romanos discussed below. The same formula of "my son and my God", with some variations was to be repeated later in the *stavrotheotokia* of the Iconoclastic period.

The Marian laments of the fifth and sixth centuries present us with an interesting problem in that the tender, lamenting mother of Christ of apocryphal literature and Syriac hymnography corresponds closely to the tender human character of the Virgin of subsequent centuries, but not to the figure of the Virgin protectress of Constantinople.[199] Although scholars have pointed to the shift in the profile of Mary from the Virgin protectress to the human mother, the literature of the fifth and sixth centuries shows that from its early stages Marian devotion

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rather than Dysmas and the Virgin as Ἁγία Μαρία (the same is the case in the *Chairete* icon from Sinai, *op.cit.*, fig. 25). The centurion Longinus is included in the earliest surviving example of the Crucifixion, typical of the iconography of the early Byzantine period; in the fifth-century London ivory Christ is depicted alive on the cross, although Longinus is seen piercing his side. See Kartsonis, *Anastasis,* 33 and fig. 1. See also the mosaic from S.Maria Antiqua in Rome dating to c.750 in Belting, *Image and Likeness*, fig. 70 on p.122.

[197] *Acta Pilati* B.X, paragraphs 2-4, 302-306.

[198] *Ibid,* 303.

[199] Averil Cameron, "The Theotokos in Sixth-century Constantinople," 79-108.

focused on both aspects of Mary's person.[200] Hence, we are not dealing with the linear development but with a simultaneous evolution of both features of Mary's character (on the one hand strength, and on the other tenderness) which nonetheless emerged within different contexts. Thus, Mary's tenderness is made evident in hymnography whereas her strength is more evident in early representations such as the sixth-century ivory panels from the British Museum (plate I) and the Museum of Berlin (plate II) or the famous seventh-century encaustic icon of the Virgin (plate III) from Mount Sinai. Both profiles of the Virgin previously associated with different phases of the development of her cult appear in the fifth and sixth centuries and result from the emphasis given to the person of Mary as a whole. They represent different aspects of the human mother of Christ and, as we shall see, they accomplished the function of helping theologians and laity alike to define the person of Christ. But what do we mean when we refer to the person of Christ? The Nestorian controversy provides us with an opportunity to follow the first attempts of fifth-century theologians to define not simply the natures of Christ but also the way in which these natures coexisted and functioned within the historical person of Jesus. Ephrem the Syrian and later Romanos the Melode depict the Virgin lamenting at the Foot of the Cross in a manner that can be explained by the growth of her cult and by the issue of theopaschism that dominated the Christological debate at the time of the Third Oecumenical Council.

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[200] *Eadem*, "A Nativity Poem ," 230; I. Kalavrezou, "When the Virgin Mary Became Meter Theou," *DOP* 44, 1990, 165-172.

In her study of the lament of the Virgin, Alexiou emphasizes the ritual elements of the lament and points out their similarity to the vernacular laments of the late Byzantine period.[201] Alexiou draws particular attention to the fainting of the Virgin as well as to ritual expressions of grief, such as scratching the face with the nails and beating of the breast. However, ritual expressions of grief are not necessarily associated with late Byzantine vernacular literature. Such elements are found in ancient Greek tradition as well as in Byzantine literature of the fourth century. A very interesting example is provided in the *Life of Saint Macrina,* by Gregory of Nyssa.[202] In this fourth-century text, Gregory refers twice to death rituals: in his accounts of the death of Naucratios and of Macrina herself. On the death of Naucratios, Macrina is said to have proved her virtue by making reason dominate sorrow.[203] In this way she gave an example of courage to her mother who, in turn, did nothing "contemptuous or feminine", such as crying out against evil, tearing apart her garments, grieving over her misfortune, or opening

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[201] Note however, that in the early recension of the *Acta Pilati* the people and the women who are present at the Crucifixion lament Christ in a similarly ritual manner, beating their breast. See Tischendorf, *Apocrypha Evangelia, Acta Pilati* A. XI.1, 248. As we shall see below, all the elements characteristic of vernacular laments derive their content from hymnography and homiletics of the early and middle Byzantine periods.

[202] Grégoire de Nysse, *Vie de Sainte Macrine,* P. Maraval (ed.), SC 178, Paris, 1971.

[203] *Vie de Sainte Macrine,* 10.1-3. For Macrina see Ch. Christakis, "A Woman Christian Sage of the Fourth Century: Macrina the Virgin-Philosopher," *Θεολογία* LXVI, 1995, 330-361.

her lament with mournful wailing.[204] The death of Macrina -whose eyes are closed according to her wishes by her brother, Gregory-[205] is followed by the description of the funerary rites performed by the virgins who formed the *entourage* of the saint.[206] The virgins who accompanied Macrina and saw her as a spiritual mother lament her in a way that bears strong similarities to the lament of the Virgin, in that the mourners enumerate the qualities of the saint in a highly emotional manner.[207] Gregory, also troubled and distressed by the sight of his dead sister and the weeping of the virgins, attempts to calm them, reminding them of the advice she gave them while still alive.[208] He calls upon them to cease lamenting and to start singing the Psalms; but their lament was so vociferous that

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[204] *Vie de Sainte Macrine,* 10.4-6; see also Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio concolatoria in Pulcheriam,* A. Spira, *Gregorii Nysseni opera, IX. Sermones,* Leiden, 1967, 461-472 and esp. 470, 20-26 (= PG 46, 876A), *ἀρά τι δυσγενὲς καὶ μικρόψυχον...*

[205] The custom of a beloved closing the eyes of the departed according to the latter's wish derives from ancient traditions regarding ancient Greek tradition as do the other funerary rites discussed here see Plato, *Phaedo,* 118a cited by Maraval, *op.cit.,* 79 *n.*4; cf. A.C. Rush, *Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity,* Washington, 1941, 108-110.

[206] The solemn death of Macrina is described in *Vie de Sainte Macrine,* 25, 226-228 and the sorrow of the virgins, who have remained silent until the moment that Macrina dies in order not to disturb her, in chapter 26, 228-232. For the silence preceding the lament cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio in Gorgoniam,* PG 35, 813D-816A. For a study of death in Gregory Nazianzen see J. Mossay, *La mort et l'au-delà dans Saint Grégoire de Nazianze,* Louvain, 1966, and with reference to funerary ritual, 210-215. See also M. Harl, "Les modèles d'un temps idéal dans quelques récits de vie Pères Cappadociens," *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au Moyen Âge IIIe-XIIIe siècles,* Colloques Internationaux C.N.R.S., Paris, 1984, 220-241 and esp. 226.

[207] *Vie de Sainte Macrine,* 26.23-29 (French translation in Maraval, *op. cit.,* 231-233.)

[208] *Ibid,* 27. Macrina had advised them that the only time tears should flow from their eyes was during prayer, 27.7-9.

he had to speak in a loud voice in order to drown it out and be heard.[209] Summarising, I suggest that expressions of ritual lament are prominent in the fourth century, in the writings even of Gregory of Nyssa and the other Cappadocians who often advised people against these practices.[210]

The Council of Ephesus

The Council of Ephesus occupies a unique place in the history of Church dogma in that it is the only oecumenical council that produced a doctrinal formulation about the Virgin Mary. Within the context of the controversy, Mariology and Christology have to be understood as the two sides of one coin.[211]

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[209] *Ibid,* 27.10-12, *...τῆς τῶν θρήνων οἰμωγῆς εἰς συμπαθῆ ψαλμῳδίαν μετατεθείσης. Ταῦτ'ἔλεγον μείζονι τῇ φωνῇ, ὡς ἄν τὸν ἦχον τῶν θρήνων ὑπερηχήσαιμι.*

[210] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio consolatoria in Pulcheriam,* 461-472 and esp. 470, 20-26, where he refers to the scratching of the face with the nails, the tearing of the hair, to covering it with dust, the beating of the breast with the hands, the throwing of one's self on the ground, the lamenting and the recalling of the name of the deceased. For a typical example of a literary lament, though lacking ritualistic expressions see *idem, Oratio funebris in Flacillam imperatricem, op. cit.,* 475-490 (=PG 46, cols. 877-892). Basil the Great, *Homilia de Gratiarum Actione,* PG 31, cols. 217-238 and esp. 229C-233B. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio XV, In Machaboeorum laudem,* PG 35, cols. 911-934 and esp. 916B; later on, the text the mother of the Maccabees, after witnessing the death of her sons, utters a prayer instead of a lament (925C-928B).

[211] Mariology is a term that bears Roman-Catholic connotations but which, however, within the particular context conveys the analogy between the study of the doctrine concerning Christ and the Theotokos respectively. With reference to the Orthodox approach to the Mother of God and a discussion of 'Mariology' see Kallistos of Diokleia, "The Sanctity and Glory of the Mother of God: Orthodox Approaches," *The Way* suppl. 51, 1984, 79-96 and esp. 79-81.

Mary served as a key for the understanding of Christ's natures.[212] However, this should not obscure the importance of the controversy for the cult of Mary herself.[213]

Antagonism between Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome was one of the issues that resolved the struggle between the patriarchs Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople.[214] The crisis that led to the council of Ephesus (431) began in Constantinople around 428, while the patriarchal throne was vacant following the death of Patriarch Siccinius I, who reigned for only one year

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[212] It might be more accurate to point to the way in which the two natures of Christ coexisted and related to each other in the historical person of Jesus.

[213] For the relationship between Mariology and Christology see J. Pelikan, *Imago Dei, The Byzantine Apologia for Icons,* New Haven and London, 1990, 128 ff.; Brecik, "Mary in the New Testament," 471-472. The popularity of the cult of Mary at Ephesus was a factor that determined to a great extent the outcome of the Synod. Nestorius failed to take this into account when he agreed that the council should meet at Ephesus.

[214] The antagonism between the cities of the empire is echoed in a speech that Nestorius delivered at the church of St Sophia on 13th December 430. I quote: "Isn't the Egyptian the eternal enemy of Constantinople and Asia?" Cf. N.H. Baynes, "Alexandria and Constantinople: A Study in Ecclesiastical Diplomacy," *JEA* 12, 1926, 145-165 (repr. in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays,* London, 1955, 97-115), W.H.C. Frend, "Popular Religion and Christological Controversy in the Fifth Century," *Religion Popular and Unpopular in the Early Christian Centuries,* XVII, London, 1976, 19-29, K.Holum, *Theodosian Empresses. Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity,* Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982, 152 and *n.*27. Holum considers antagonism between the episcopal sees of Antioch and Alexandria as the true cause of the Nestorian controversy, viewing the dogmatic issue simply as a diversion invented by Cyril to cover the real issue of the day. Holum's position does not take into consideration either the importance of the theological developments of the previous centuries or the way in which politics and religious issues were interwoven in Byzantium. For the theological background of the Nestorian controversy see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition,* vol. I, 361-439.

(426-427). The persons involved in the dramatic developments of the fifth century included, apart from the patriarchs themselves, the Augusta Aelia Pulcheria, sister of the emperor Theodosius II, Proclus, the unsuccessful heir to the patriarchal throne in the late 420s and later Patriarch of Constantinople, and Popes Celestine and Leo. To provide an account of the controversy and its consequences would fall outside the scope of the present study.[215] However, it is necessary to consider two aspects of this Christological debate: first, the relationship of the debate to the cult of the Virgin and second, the issue of theopaschism. It is the significance of these two themes that may explain the rise of the lament of the Virgin in the fifth and sixth centuries. The Nestorian controversy demonstrates, on the one hand, the importance that the Virgin had to the correct understanding of Christology and, on the other, the significance of the suffering of God in developing and fully appreciating the incarnational theology that was to focus on the person of Christ and the way in which spirit and matter relate to each other within the historical person of Jesus.

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[215] The reader can refer to studies by J. Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought,* Washington, 1969; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition,* vol. I, 414-519; and to the more recent systematic study by J. McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria, The Christological Controversy, Its History, Theology and Texts,* Leiden 1994. However, the study by McGuckin focuses on Cyril of Alexandria and is scarcely just to the views of Nestorius. Cf. Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia, "The Humanity of Christ," The Fourth Constantinople Lecture (29/30 November 1984), offprint from *The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association,* 1985.

To a great extent the controversy was due to the misunderstanding that arose from the disparate use of terminology.[216] For instance, Nestorius propagated the use of the term 'Anthropotokos' or the more compromising term 'Christotokos' as more appropriate to the Virgin who gave birth to the Lord. The Antiochene exegetical background of Nestorius, a former student of Theodore of Mopsuestia and faithful follower of the latter's method of Biblical interpretation, explains his difficulty in accepting the 'paradoxical' formulation of Cyril, according to which God was born of a woman.[217] The outbreak of the controversy

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[216] The 'Babel-like' use of the terms *physis* and *hypostasis* which were employed in different senses by the two adversaries in the controversy is a characteristic example. Cyril used *physis* in the ancient sense signifying concrete reality or existence, whereas Nestorius used it in the modern sense of nature, or 'make-up' of a thing. Similarly, *hypostasis,* an earlier synonym of *physis,* was used by Cyril to signify the actual concrete reality of a thing while Nestorius used it in its ancient sense, as a synonym of *physis.* The implications of these semantic variations were of crucial importance to the debate. For the different traditions of Christological terminology see V.C. Samuel, "Christology and Terminology," *The Harp* 1, Nos. 2 and 3, 1988, 129-34.

[217] The compromising title of 'Christotokos' that Nestorius proposed persuaded the monastic camp that they indeed had a reason to contest his views since it implied a theology of 'psilanthropism,' in that it presented Christ as a mere man (as did the doctrine propounded by Paul of Samosata). Stressing the key words 'strictly speaking', the adversaries of Nestorius emphasized and mocked the Antiochene principles underlying the interpretation given by the patriarch and made the following phrase the rallying cry of their movement: "If Mary is not strictly speaking the Mother of God, then her son is not, strictly speaking, God." See McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria,* 27-28. In 428, Nestorius, answering to the famous panegyric on the Virgin delivered by Proclus of Constantinople, pronounced the following words: "Whoever claims without qualification that God was born of Mary prostitutes the reputation of the faith...". Nestorius feared possible accusations by the pagans, who might perceive Christ as yet another pagan god. At the same time, however, his words betray an uneasiness in

was marked by the homily on Mary preached by Proclus of Constantinople in St Sophia in 428.[218] In a way that clearly provoked his opponent, Proclus declares in the opening lines of his sermon that Mary is the Mother of God, in whom the union of natures of Christ was forged. Nestorius reacted violently to the designation of Mary as 'Theotokos', for his Christology with all its implications was distinctly different to the one propagated by Proclus. The news soon reached Alexandria, where Cyril had succeeded his uncle

to the patriarchal throne.[219] With his letter to the monks of Egypt, Cyril entered publicly into the debate.[220]

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accepting allegory and metaphor as expressions of Christian faith. See F. Loofs, *Nestorius and His Place in the History of Christian Doctrine,* Cambridge, 1914, 337-338.

[218] The homily was preached most probably on the feast of the Virgin on the 23rd December. The date is given by Theophanes, (de Boor), 88. For the text, see Proclus of Constantinople, *De Laudibus Sanctae Mariae,* PG 65, cols. 680C - 692B and E. Schwartz (ed.), ACO I, 1, 1, 103-107 and discussion by Constas, "Weaving the Body of God," 169-194.

[219] Cyril became archbishop on 18th October 412, at the age of 34. His writings reveal a high level of learning. In his early writings, Cyril is mainly concerned with Biblical interpretation and works against heretics. Among these writings is a *Thesaurus*, a work heavily influenced by Athanasius' *Discourses Against the Arians*, a *Commentary on St John's Gospel* and a treatise entitled *Dialogues on the Trinity*. The ecclesiastical historian Sokrates gives a rather confused picture of the early years of Cyril's patriarchate. The issues that were at the centre of the clashes in Alexandria were the confiscation of the Novatianist churches, the strife with the Praetorian Prefect Orestes and the violence of the crowd which on occasions attacked the Jews of the city and was also responsible for the lynching of the philosopher Hypatia. However biased Sokrates' account may be, the presence of the *parabalani*, the bodyguards of the patriarch, attests to the troubled atmosphere in Alexandria during the first decades of the fifth century.

Mary and the Suffering of Christ

The issue of the single or double subjectivity of Christ which referred to the way in which the two natures -human and divine- co-existed in Christ, was argued on the basis of: a) his Incarnation in the womb of Mary and b) Christ's suffering, death and Resurrection.[221] Cyril used his skills as a Biblical exegete to draw upon the Scriptures for his arguments in support of Christ's single subjectivity.[222] His originality was revealed in the formulation of the theory of

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See *Sokrates Kirchengeschichte,* G.Ch. Hansen (ed.), Verlag, 1995, book VII, 353 ff. and the discussion by McGuckin, *St Cyril of Alexandria,* 1-20. Cyril's early Paschal homilies show his concern over the adoption of Jewish customs by Christians. See also, R.Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology,* Yale, 1971, for a discussion of the Jews in Cyril's thought and work.

[220] The letter is translated by McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria,* 245-261. Henceforth, Cyril started examining the issues involved in the debate from a Biblical point of view. By 430, Cyril had written his *Five Books against Nestorius* that circulated in Egypt and Constantinople. At this point, Andrew of Samosata and Theodoret of Cyrrhus also enter the debate and become Cyril's intellectual opponents.

[221] For the importance of these two themes in the context of the Council of Ephesus and the Christological developments of the time see Peltomaa, "The *Tomus ad Armenios de Fide* of Proclus of Constantinople and the Christological Emphasis of the *Akathistos* Hymn," 25-37.

[222] The way that the two natures relate to each other is expressed in the Biblical metaphors of the Ark of the Covenant, or in the live coal of Isaiah's vision where the burning bush referred to Mary. Cyril also used as a metaphor the lily and its fragrance, the precious stone and the radiance it emits, and the body and soul of a man. See McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria,* 196 ff.

communicatio idiomatum.[223] Recognition of this theory legitimised the cross-referential language that Cyril employed; it was precisely on this basis that he could assert that Mary gave birth to God and God died in the flesh.[224] The apparent contradiction served to signify the full appropriation of human nature by Christ. Although Cyril was the first Christian writer to draw so much attention to the suffering of Christ, theopaschism was not new to Christian thought. A century before Cyril, the Cappadocian Gregory Nazianzen related his understanding of the person of Christ to his suffering within a soteriological context[225] and by the same token the suffering of Christ became an important presupposition in the development of Gregory's anthropology.[226] Long before the debate over the way that the natures of Christ related to each other Gregory Nazianzen had put the whole question in a soteriological perspective, asserting that *"both natures are*

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[223] The *communicatio* or *antidosis idiomaton* signified the exchange of properties between the human and the divine nature of Christ. According to Cyril, Christ fully experienced the human condition, including feelings such as fatigue, pain and death.

[224] On the suffering of God see L. Gillet, "Does God Suffer?" *Sobornost* 3:15, 1954, 112-120 and *idem,* "Looking unto the Crucified Lord," *Sobornost* 3:13, 1953, 24-33.

[225] Gregory stated that the deification of mankind that was possible before the Fall would only be possible after the Incarnation of the Word of God. (*Or.* 45.9, 38.11) Within this context, the Fall is seen as the cause of the ontological corruption of the human nature and salvation is made possible only through the humanity and **suffering** of God (*Or.* 45.22, 30.1).

[226] See D. Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation: A Study in Gregory of Nazianzus,* Philadelphia, 1971, 69-73; G. Telepneff, "Theopaschite Language in the Soteriology of Saint Gregory the Theologian," *GrOrthThR* 32, No. 4, 1987, 403-416.

one by combination (ἐν τῇ συγκράσει) because God becomes man and humanity is deified." [227]

As a hymnographical theme, the Virgin lamenting at the foot of the cross combines the two critical aspects of Jesus' earthly life, both of which demonstrate his love and philanthropy through which redemption was made possible. The human birth and death of Christ as treated by Syriac writers and Romanos the Melode reflect the theological concerns of the fifth century.[228] The relationship between the Nativity and the Crucifixion is artfully expressed by Romanos in the

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[227] Gregory Nazianzen, *Epistle* 101.21 in P. Gallay (ed.), *Grégoire de Nazianze. Lettres Théologiques*, SC 208, Paris, 1974, 70-84 and esp. 44. Deification of mankind was for Gregory the basic presupposition upon which his whole Christology was built. Deification, i.e., the union with God, was understood as the ultimate end of man whose soul was made in the likeness of the divine and hence was naturally moving towards its union with its prime cause; *Oratio II apologetica,* PG 35, cols. 408-514, 2.22 (=PG 35, 432 A-B); *Oratio* 29.19, (A.J. Mason, *The Five Theological Orations of Gregory of Nazianzus,* CPT 1, Cambridge, 1899); 38.11, 39.17, 45.9. Referring to the way in which the two natures of Christ relate to each other, Gregory introduces the word σύγκρασις as understood in its Aristotelian sense, that is not implying fusion or mixture of the two natures in Christ. He understands the Incarnation as the σύγκρασις of two *perfect* natures. It was precisely this notion of the two perfects that Apollinarius with his philosophical background could not accept. Cf., Gregory Nazianzen, *Oration* 29.19. "what he was he continued to be; what he was not he took it to himself...".

[228] On grounds of theological preoccupations Vereecken ("L'Hymne Acathiste," 361) suggests Romanos the Melode as the author of the Akathist Hymn. Studying the work of Romanos from a different perspective, Catafygiotou-Topping notes the same prevailing themes in the poetry of the Syrian Melode: emphasis on the sacrifice of Christ, the agony of the Crucifixion and God's absolute philanthropy. Catafygiotou-Topping, "St Romanos the Melode: Prince of Byzantine Poets," 73.

prediction of Mary's lament at the Crucifixion. Christ prophesies his death to Mary who is holding him in her arms as an infant:

> "I shall not make you grieve, my servant and my mother. I will make known to you know what I shall do and I shall take care of your soul, o Mary. The one that you are holding in your arms, before long you shall see him with his hands nailed, because I love your race; the one that you are breast-feeding, others will make him drink gall; the one that you are embracing, he will be spat upon by others; the one you named Life, you must see him hanging on the cross and you shall lament my death, but you shall kiss me when I shall be resurrected, [o Mary] full of grace." [229]

In the following stanza, Mary after having heard these words starts lamenting Jesus and wishes not to witness the slaughter of her son. Jesus pleads with her to cease crying in a way reminiscent of the hymn *Mary at the Foot of the Cross.* The text reads:

> "Cease crying over what you know not, mother; if that [i.e. his sacrifice] is not accomplished, all those for whom you intercede to me will not be saved, [o Mary] full of grace." [230]

The theme echoes Cyril's theopaschite doctrine, i.e. the suffering of Christ as the supreme act of redemption. The paradox does not concern solely the language employed but also is a reflection of real situations in all their vastness. Concentrating on the suffering of Christ, Cyril stated that indeed God suffered in

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[229] Romanos the Melode, *On the Nativity II,* st. 16, 108, (my translation).

[230] *Ibid,* st. 17, 108, (my translation).

the flesh since the pain and the death on the cross were experienced by his human nature, which was fully appropriated by the divine. For Cyril, this is the way in which salvation is made possible. In the words of Irenaeus of Lyons who influenced both Athanasius the Great and Cyril of Alexandria, "God became man so that man could become God".[231]

The Prosopon of Christ

The *communicatio idiomatum* was nothing more than an attempt to make intelligible the person of Christ in a concrete and realistic way, i.e. the way in which Christ experienced the reality of the Incarnation during his earthly life, a subject that subsequently gave rise to further theological speculation. It is important to bear in mind that the concept of the person lies at the core of Christian ecclesiology.[232] According to Nestorius' 'prosopic theory'[233], in Jesus

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[231] For the impact of Cyril's thought on Christian philosophy see McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria,* 224.

[232] We have already seen the way in which Gregory Nazianzen's doctrine of the Incarnation influences decisively his anthropology. With reference to Theopaschism, Gregory writes that the "Church of God has been gathered together by the suffering of God for us"; cf. V. Lossky, "The Theological Notion of the Human Person," in J.H. Ericson and T.E. Bird (eds.), *In the Image and Likeness of God,* Crestwood, 1985, 111-123; J. Zizioulas, "Personhood and Being," in *Being as Communion,* Crestwood, 1993, 27-65 and esp. 40-41 and 56 ff.; Ch. Yannaras, *Το πρόσωπο και ὁ ἔρως,* Athens, 1987, 21; *idem, Ἡ ἀπανθρωπία τοῦ δικαιώματος,* Athens, 1998, 18.

[233] The term *prosopon* has to be understood in the sense it had for the fifth-century patriarch and is not to be confused with modern psychoanalytical approaches. Nestorius employed the term to signify the perceptible characteristics of a nature, whereas Cyril used it as referring to the hypostatic centre of a human being. For the background of the

there existed two distinct *ousiai,* one human and the other divine, each of them possessing its own characteristics. Both *ousiai* are united in the person (*prosopon*) of the historical Jesus, but Nestorius stresses that theological terminology should be applied with extreme care in order to avoid blasphemy, over-simplification or confusion, a statement that echoes clearly his Antiochene exegetical background of literal exegesis. In his apology, the *Book (or Bazaar) of Heraclides,* Nestorius explains that "the Lord assumed the form of a slave for his *prosopon*, but not for his nature, and not by any changing of essence."[234] Nestorius understood that any being consists of its *ousia* (the 'essential self'),[235] and the *prosopon* (the outward appearance of the *ousia*). But when he referred to the Incarnation, he understood that the human *ousia* of the Logos existed alongside the divine one, since man cannot become God and God cannot become a slave in the determining essence of his being.[236] So, Cyril and Nestorius essentially agreed on the existence of the two *'ousiai'* or 'natures' in Christ.

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term see Grillmeier, *op.cit.,* 396, 402, and for its use in the Council of Ephesus, *ibid,* 487. See also McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria,* 144 ff.; M. Begzos, "Οὐσία καί Πρόσωπο στή Μεσαιωνική Δύση καί στή Βυζαντινή Ἀνατολή," *Parnassos* 57, 1995, 13-30.

[234] G. Driver and L. Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heraclides,* [The Book of Heraclides], Oxford, 1925, 230; The Book of Heraclides was written by Nestorius at the time of his exile, after the Council of Ephesus. Cf. the study by M. Jugie, *Nestorius et la controverse nestorienne,* Paris, 1912 and R.C. Chesnut's more recent, "The Two Prosopa in Nestorius' Bazaar of Heraclides," *JThS* 29, 1978, 392-408; J. McGuckin, "The Christology of Nestorius of Constantinople," *PBR* 7, 1988, 93-129.

[235] The term 'nature' is employed as an alternative term for *ousia.* M. Anastos, "Nestorius was Orthodox," *DOP* 16, 1962, 119-140, esp. 126.

[236] Anastos, "Nestorius was Orthodox," 127.

The core of the issue was the way in which the two natures of Christ related to each other. Responding to this question, Nestorius held that they were related by conjunction (συνάφεια), a term that meant that at every point the distinction of the two natures was maintained. Therefore, we should apply the term servant when referring to the human actions of Jesus and the term God when referring to his divine actions, i.e. his miracles.[237] In order to express his Christology Nestorius embarked on a debate so heavily weighted with terminology that it resulted in being misunderstood;[238] moreover, his Christology was far too cerebral to be appreciated by his contemporaries.[239] While Nestorius

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[237] In order to complete his Christology, since he rejected the union of natures, Nestorius turned towards the will of the human nature of Jesus. His will, Nestorius held, was absolutely free and as such it was obedient and in accordance with the will of the Father.

[238] Anastos, "Nestorius was Orthodox," 119-140. The author suggests that by keeping his distance from the controversy the modern reader may apply the criteria of Orthodoxy, as expressed at the Council of Chalcedon, to the teaching of Nestorius and see that, finally, it is in accordance with the definition of Orthodox faith. That may be true, but I would suggest that the essence of the controversy itself was precisely the definition of ideas and terms that could only have been settled through the dialectic developed between the two patriarchs.

[239] The painstaking adherence of the Antiochene exegetical school to the intellectual examination of terminology was definitely not an attitude that could win over the masses. On the contrary, the allegorical interpretation employed by the Alexandrians was far more appealing to people who were more competent to perceive theological speculation through poetic language rather than through analytical thought. According to Frend, ("Popular Religion and Christological Controversy," 20-21) "as in the Arian controversy, Alexandria spoke for the majority. Athanasius' ability to interpret subtle theological concepts successfully to people of an entirely different religious and cultural outlook from himself was perfected by Cyril"; Anastos, "Nestorius was Orthodox," 119-

argued for a double-subjectivity Christology, Cyril insisted on the hypostatic union. It was precisely the use of the term 'union' (*henosis)* that led Cyril's opponents to accuse him of being an Apollinarist; but Cyril did not argue for a mingling, or confusion of the two natures of Christ but for a union without mixture or confusion. His doctrine of hypostatic union as expressed in his work *On the Creed (De Recta Fide)* was essential for the soteriology of the Church.[240] If it was not God himself who assumed the form of a slave, then the Incarnation would be ineffectual.[241] By the same token, if it was not God that was made man,

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140. Nestorius, being unable to ascribe the divine actions to the historical Jesus, eventually depicted him as a leader and moral guide.

[240] For the text, see L.Wickham (ed. and transl.), *Cyril of Alexandria. Select Letters,* Oxford 1983, 94-131. After the Council of Chalcedon and the schism between Chalcadonian and non-Chalcedonian Churches, there were numerous attempts to breach the dogmatic gap. One of them was made by Severus (d. 538), the Monophysite bishop of Antioch. Severus represented the moderate Monophysite Church, asserting the single nature of Christ but nonetheless without rejecting his humanity. He was educated in Alexandria and Beirut and he was tonsured a monk; he became bishop of Antioch in 512 but held the post for only six years until 518 when he was deposed for his Monophysite beliefs. He contested the beliefs of Julian of Halicarnassus and the Aphthartodocetae who held that the body of Christ was incorruptible, stressing the divinity of Christ while at the same time accepting his humanity. For the numerous homilies of Severus see *Les Homiliae Cathedrales de Sévère d'Antioche,* R. Duval et.al. (eds.), 17 vols., Paris, 1906-1976. See also, W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement,* Cambridge, 1972, 201-295; J. Lebon, *Le Monophysitisme Severien,* Louvain 1909; and recently, I. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite,* Norwich, 1988.

[241] The same point was emphasized by Gregory Nazianzen in his *Epistles* 101 and 102. The main idea expressed was the following: "that which has not been assumed has not been healed...that which is truly united with God is saved... Adam is completely saved only by complete union with him who has been born in completeness..." For Gregory the

then the Eucharist would also be void of its fundamental meaning for the Church, i.e. redemption through communion of the very flesh and blood of God.[242] For Cyril, who was a faithful partisan of Alexandrian exegesis, Christ's single-subjectivity could not be better expressed than through a paradoxical language in accord with the nature of the mystery of the Incarnation itself. Consequently, he was determined to defend the term 'Theotokos'. The same paradoxical language is echoed in the other key phrase of the debate, that the Lord "suffered impassibly" (ἀπαθῶς ἔπαθεν). Cyril's theopaschite doctrine is affirmed in the twelfth anathema with which he concludes his third letter to Nestorius:

> "If anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, and tasted death in the flesh, becoming the first-born from the dead, although as God he is life and life-giving, let him be anathema." [243]

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suffering of Christ on the cross reinstates humanity to its former state, i.e. its state before the Fall. Cf. *Epistle* 101, *Oration* 33.9. Cyril in his turn was asking, how could God have saved what he did not assume; see Grillmeier, *op.cit.*, 416-417.

[242] The notion of 'dynamic soteriology' was the fundamental concern of the Alexandrian school, evidenced by Athanasius' *De Incarnatione.* The theory of deification was of the essence and formed the core of Cyril's theology. For Athanasius' soteriology see G. Telepneff and J. Thornton, "Arian Transcendence and the Notion of *Theosis* in Saint Athanasius," *GrOrthThR* 32, No 3, 1987, 271-284. For the importance of the teaching of Athanasius in the theology of Cyril see Grillmeier, *op. cit.*, 414-415. For the ecclesiological implications of the Eucharist see J. Zizioulas, "Eucharist and Catholicity," in *Being as Communion,* 143-169 and esp. 151ff.

[243] Cyril of Alexandria, *Third Letter to Nestorius*, transl. in McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria,* 266-275, esp. 275; see also, *op. cit.*, the *Explanation of the Twelve Chapters*, 282-293 and esp. 292-293.

But in the meantime Nestorius had persuaded Theodosius II to summon an oecumenical council. This would be the Third Oecumenical Council of the Church. Nestorius, enjoying the backing of the emperor, had earlier provoked Cyril to start a face-to-face dialogue; but he had obviously underestimated the importance of the place where the synod would be convened, the ancient city of Ephesus.[244]

Syriac Hymnography and Romanos the Melode

The sixth century presents a contradictory picture of the Virgin Mary: on the one hand, there is the testimony of the tender and human mother depicted in the hymn *Mary at the Foot of the Cross* by Romanos the Melode from the early part of the century;[245] on the other, there is the majestic, distant figure of Mary, who emerges as the protectress of Constantinople. In this section we shall study Mary as portrayed in the hymns of the Syriac poets and Romanos. Biographical information about Romanos the Melode is very slight.[246] According to the

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[244] See above and Holum, *Theodosian Empresses,* 162 ff. For an account of the events that took place during and after the Council see Grillmeier, *op. cit.,* 484 ff.

[245] For the *kontakion* see Romanos the Melode, *Hymnes,* J. Grosdidier de Matons (ed.), vol. IV, 160-184. For the dating see J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance,* Paris, 1977, 243 ff.

[246] Most of the biographical information about Romanos the Melode derives from various accounts in *synaxaria* and a late *Vita* published by Athanasios Landos (*Ἁμαρτωλῶν Σωτηρία,* Venice, 1641). The *Vita* according to Grosdidier de Matons (*Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance,* 159-160) follows the account in a *synaxarion.* Cf. Averil Cameron, "Disputations, Polemical Literature and the Formation of Opinion in the Early Byzantine Period," *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Medieval Near East,* G.J. Reinink and H.L.J. Vastinphout,

Typikon of Constantinople, Romanos was born in Emesa of Syria, became a deacon in the church of the Anastasis in Beirut, and some time during the reign of Anastasius went to Constantinople where he remained until the end of his life.[247] The brief references in *synaxaria* but also in *menologia* to Romanos associate the poet with the Virgin in two respects: first, they state explicitly that upon his arrival in Constantinople Romanos went to the monastery of the Virgin *ἐν τοῖς Κύρου*, and, second, they attribute his writing of religious poetry to the miraculous talent granted to him by the Mother of God herself.[248] The date of his birth and death is uncertain although Barry Baldwin suggests that we must date his death prior to the reign of Justinian but after 555 A.D.[249] Romanos' sources, although they cannot be determined with any certainty, may lie in Syriac poetry but the depiction of the Virgin in this particularly tender and human way by Syrian poets has so far been explained on grounds only of literary influence. The influence of Syriac hymns on Byzantine hymnography has long been the subject of scholarly

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Leiden, 1991, 91-108. See also the Introduction by Grosdidier de Matons (Romanos the Melode, *Hymnes,* vol.1, SC 99, Paris 1964, 13-14). For a chronological investigation of some of the hymns of Romanos see E. Catafygiotou- Topping, "The Apostle Peter, Justinian and Romanos the Melode," *BMGS* 2, 1976, 1-15.

[247] A. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie liturgiceskich rukopisej,* vol. I, Kiev, 1895, 10. See also Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance,* 160-161.

[248] Dmitrievskij, *op. cit.*, 10. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance,* 160-162.

[249] Barry Baldwin, s.v. "Romanos the Melode," *ODB,* vol. 3, 1807-1808. See also J.H. Barkhuizen, "Romanos Melodos: on Earthquakes and Fires," *JÖB* 45, 1995, 1-18.

research.[250] The first laments of the Virgin in Syriac hymnography are attributed to Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306-373) and Jacob of Sarug (c. 451-521).[251] In a poem

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[250] In their search for the origins of religious poetry in Byzantium scholars working on Byzantine hymnography have turned to the Syriac Orient since Byzantine hymnographers were undoubtedly influenced by hymns by celebrated Syriac hymnographers, as we shall see below, with reference to the Marian lament. However, the whole issue is not a simple one. See the concise article by S. Brock, "Syriac and Greek Hymnography: Problems of Origin," *Studies in Syriac Christianity,* London 1992, 77-81. For Syriac Christianity, see H.J.W. Drijvers, "Early Syriac Christianity: Some Recent Publications," *VigChr* 50, 1996, 159-177 and the articles by the same author published in *History and Religion in Late Antique Syria,* London, 1994. The Greek speaking world was introduced to isosyllabic poetry by translations of Syriac religious poetry; at the end of the fourth century, Jerome states that he knew some of the works of Ephrem the Syrian in Greek translation. See the discussion by Brock, "Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek," 1-17; on the origins of the *kontakion* see P. Christou, "Ἡ Γένεσις τοῦ Κοντακίου," *Kleronomia* 6, vol. ii, 1974, 273-350 and esp. 281 ff.

[251] For the debt of Byzantine authors to Syriac hymnography in the eighth and ninth centuries see N.J. Tsironis, "George of Nicomedia: Convention and Originality in the Homily on Good Friday," *Studia Patristica,* vol. XXX, 1997, 332-336. Ephrem the Syrian was born at Nisibis c. 306 and died at Edessa in 373. He served the Church as a deacon and wrote in Syriac but his works, most of them in verse, were translated into many languages and exercised an unprecedented influence on Greek hymnography. Ephrem combined elements of pre-Nicene Christianity, such as Encratism and Gnosticism, as well as elements of Judaism and employed them within a Christian framework in a distinctly symbolic way. It has been suggested that Ephrem's choice of metrical form was not accidental. Sozomenos states that "...because Ephrem saw the Syrians being enchanted by the beauty of poetry and the rhythm of music and gradually getting used to heretical doctrines, he decided to employ Harmonios' metres, in spite of the fact that he did not have a Greek education, and he composed new hymns in agreement with the teachings of the Church on his [Harmonios'] patterns..." (transl. K. Mitsakis), Sozomenos, III, 16,7, [J. Bidez (ed.), *Histoire Ecclésiastique,* Paris, 1983 (with French transl. by A.J. Festugière)]. For a more recent critical edition see J. Bidez

that was to be read during Saturday vespers in Holy Week the celebrated hymnographer Ephrem the Syrian elaborates the theme of the lament.[252] In this hymn the Virgin approaches the cross and speaks to the Lord without expecting a response. It is a silent lamentation, and one of the first attempts to reveal the human aspect of the salvatory mystery.

Jacob of Sarug was born in Mesopotamia (at Kurtham) and was educated in Edessa before being ordained bishop of Batnan in 519.[253] Among his numerous

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and G.Ch. Hansen, *Sozomenus Kirchengeschichte,* 2 vols., GCS, Berlin, 1995; cf. K. Mitsakis, "The Hymnography of the Greek Church in the Early Christian Centuries," *JÖB* 20, 1971, 31-49 and esp. 37-39. Mitsakis explains monastic opposition to hymnography in the early Christian centuries on the grounds of its association with unorthodox doctrines, *op.cit.,* 39-42. For the vast bibliography on Ephrem see S. Brock, "Syriac Studies 1971-1980. A Classified Bibliography," *Parole de l'Orient* 10, 1981-1982, 320-327. For Edessa, 'the Athens of the East' at the time of Ephrem see Drijvers, "Early Syriac Christianity," 173-175 and *notes* 29, 30.

[252] D. Caillau, *S.Patris nostri Ephraem Syri Opera,* IV, Paris, 1844, pp. 440-444; also introduction to the hymn by Romanos, *Marie à la Croix,* Grosdidier de Matons (ed.), SC 128, p.144. It is not certain that the hymn was written by Ephrem since many of the hymns attributed to the Syriac hymnographer are spurious. See S.Brock, "Greek into Syriac and Syriac into Greek," *Journal of the Syriac Academy* III, Baghdad 1977, 1-17 and esp. 13; C. Emereau, "Saint Éphrem, Docteur de l'Église et l'histoire littéraire de ses oeuvres," *EO* 20, 1921, 29-45, (repr. 1971). For Ephrem's use of typology see R. Murray, "Mary, the Second Eve in the Early Syriac Fathers," *ECR* 3:4, 1971, 372-384; *idem, Symbols of the Church and the Kingdom,* 144-150. For Ephrem, Mariology was closely related to the Incarnation; both subjects formed the core of his theology. Ephrem elaborated all the 'types'of the Virgin mentioned in the Old Testament (Eve, Rachel, Tamar, Ruth, the table of the Law and the Ark of the Covenant, are all to be found in his Hymns on the Nativity 8.13; 13.2-5; 9.7-16; 15.8; 16.12).

[253]P. Martin, "Un évêque poète au V et au VI siècle ou Jacques de Saroug, sa vie, son temps, ses oeuvres, ses croyances," *RSÉ* 34, 1876, 309-352, 385-419; S. Brock, "Jacob

metrical homilies there is one on the Dormition in which he includes a passage that relates the lament of the Virgin. The text reads as follows:

> "Many sorrows has your mother borne for your sake, and all afflictions surrounded her at your Crucifixion. How much sorrowing, how much weeping and how many tears of suffering did her eyes shed at your funeral... How many terrors did the mother of Mercy experience when you were buried and the guards of the sepulchre turned her away, so that she could not approach you!"[254]

Although authorship cannot be easily established and the manuscript tradition of the Syriac texts is often so complicated as to make the study of these texts a domain reserved for the specialist, it is rather probable that the first attempts to compose Mary's lament were made in the Syriac Orient. [255] Certain scholars

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of Serugh on the Veil of Moses," *Sobornost* 3:1, 1981, 70-85, and esp. 70-71 with *notes.* See also, R. Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies,* London, 1976, 113-141 and esp.126 ff, where the author points to the importance that Jacob placed in the humanity of Christ, at one point saying even that the Word was embodied in Adam who was created not just in the image of the Father (the 'Great Mind'), but "in the image of the human Jesus that was to come to earth."

[254] The hymn elsewhere provides evidence of the introduction of the feast of the Dormition, but most interestingly for the present study it introduces the lamentation of the Mother of God at the crucifixion and the burial of the Lord. Jacob of Sarug, *Hymn on the Dormition of the Mother of God,* in Baumstark (ed.) OC 5, 1905, 91-9. See also P. Mouterde, "Deux homélies inédites de Jacques de Saroug," *Mélanges de l'Université de S.Joseph* 26, 1944-1946, homilies on Mary at the foot of the cross in 9-14, 23-28.

[255]The Coptic *theotokia* were not collected before the seventh century, although they may have been composed long before. Given the uncertainty concerning their date of composition I shall not include them in the present study; their development should be the subject of a separate study. See Lauzière, "Les Théotokies Coptes," 312-327. For

argue that Romanos was heavily influenced by Ephrem although this is not easy to prove.[256] In the case of the hymn on *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, it is possible that Romanos was inspired by a hymn written by Ephrem to be read during vespers on Saturday in Holy Week.[257] This hymn contains a lament of the Virgin that is thought to be the immediate precursor of Romanos' *kontakion*. In the case of Ephrem, however, Mary's lament is silent and all the striking elements of Romanos' *kontakion*, namely the dramatic setting and the dialogue between the Virgin and Christ, are absent.[258]

In Romanos' hymn *Mary at the Foot of the Cross,* the Virgin appears as a human mother who laments her dying son. The scarce references to the Virgin as the ἀμνάς in Melito give way after a few centuries to the fully-fleshed human Mother of God who plays the central role in the hymn of Romanos. Apart from

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literary production in Palestine see R. Stichel, "Homiletik, Hymnographie und Hagiographie im Frühbyzantinischen Palästina," *JÖB* 44, 1994, 389-406.

[256] C. Émereau, *Saint Ephrem le Syrien. Son oeuvre littéraire grecque,* Paris, 1919, 103-107. For a more sceptical approach, see Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance,* 23-30 and 254-255; W.L. Petersen, *The Diatessaron and Ephrem Syrus as Sources of Romanos the Melodist,* CSCO, vol. 466, Leipzig,1986. H. Hunger ("Das Lebenspendende Wasser. Romanos Melodos, Kontakion 9 (Oxf.=19 SC): Jesus und die Samariterin," *JÖB* 38, 1988,125-157) traces the sources of Romanos to Greek models. It would be reasonable to suggest that Romanos drew material from both Greek and Syriac sources.

[257] Caillau, *S.Patris nostri Ephraem Syri Opera,* vol. IV, 440-444.

[258] For a comparison of the two laments see Alexiou, "The Lament of the Virgin in Byzantine Literature and Modern Greek Folk Song," 114-115; S. Brock, "Dramatic Dialogue Poems," *IV Symposium Syriacum: Literary Genres in Syriac Literature,* OCA 229, 1987, 135-147; Averil Cameron, "Disputations, Polemical Literature and the Formation of Opinion in the Early Byzantine Period," 91-108.

the hymn *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*,[259] features of the lament may be detected in the hymn *On Abraham*, as well as in the hymns on the Annunciation, the Passion of the Lord and the Resurrection. In a comparative reading the lament of the Virgin and that of Sarah present a striking similarity of attitudes that supports Alexiou's position about the importance of Biblical laments.[260] Both Sarah and the Virgin address their sons with a similar vocabulary and in a tone that is emotionally charged.[261] Both laments make use of the contrast between different periods of time, namely, past and present, where the past was full of promises and joy whereas the present is full of delusion that makes the promises of the angels null and void.[262] In the hymn *Mary at the Foot of the Cross,* Romanos employs a vocabulary that is reminiscent of the homily *On Pascha* by Melito of Sardis.[263]

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[259] This hymn is perhaps the one that has attracted more scholarly attention than any other hymn (with the sole exception of the *kontakion* on the Nativity). See Alexiou, "The Lament of the Virgin in Byzantine and Modern Greek Folk Song," 113-118.

[260] Alexiou and Dronke, "The Lament of Jephtha's Daughter," 819-863 and above, chapter I.

[261] Sarah laments her miraculous birth (st.4.6) that was announced by the angel of God (st.7). The same emphasis on the maternal relationship is noticed in Mary's lament (st.1, 6bis. 5-9). Nature also plays an important role in both hymns (Abraham st.13 - Mary at the Foot of the Cross st.16). Concern for the pure sacrifice is also echoed in the words of Abraham (st.12.4-5) and Christ (6.1-2) respectively. Sarah and the Virgin address their sons as the 'light' and the 'dawn of my eyes' (Abraham st.10.4 - Mary at the Foot of the Cross st.2.8). Finally, although Sarah and the Virgin ask the victims of the sacrifice to respond to their love and grief (Abraham 15- Mary at the Foot of the Cross *passim*), Sarah eventually gives her consent to the act (Abraham st. 14), but Mary does not.

[262] Cf. second hymn *On the Nativity,* vol. II, 88-111. In this hymn we find the counterpart of 'my son and my God'; Christ calls Mary 'my servant and my mother', st. 16. The subject of Mary's maternity serves to recapitulate the whole theology of the Incarnation

We have already seen that nature is a standard theme of the lament. The references to nature in the hymn *Mary at the Foot of the Cross* are not voiced by the Virgin and they are not as elaborate as elsewhere in the work of Romanos. Linked with the paradox of the life-giving mystery that forms the core of the hymn, nature is evoked in the prooimion of the hymn *On the Passion.*[264] In the famous prooimion of the first hymn *On the Nativity,* the Virgin and nature occupy the opening verses of the composition. Particular emphasis is given to the Incarnation of the Word by a virgin,[265] while personified nature "makes accessible a cave to the Inaccessible."[266] The miracles of Christ that are often included in homilies on Good Friday and in related hymns of the middle Byzantine period are elaborated in the hymn *On the Passion,* on the basis of the antithetical structure that permeates the whole *kontakion.*[267] Anti-Jewish polemic

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and Christ himself prophesies his crucifixion and her lament. Mary, hearing these words, laments for the future and Christ consoles her imploring her to understand the purpose of the Incarnation (st. 16-18). Within the context of the contrast between past and present see the New Testament theme of Christ's loneliness at the Crucifixion, also to be found in apocryphal literature (st.3.7-9). In subsequent laments the theme will be applied to the Virgin who is left alone.

[263] See, for instance, the use of the word ἀμνας in st.1 and 11. Adjectives deriving from the typological associations of the Mother of God are to be found in most of his hymns.

[264] Romanos the Melode, *Hymnes,* vol. IV, *On the Passion,* 202-231.

[265] *Ibid,* vol. II, *On the Nativity,* prooimion, 50.

[266] *Ibid,* 50; note the careful choice of the antithetical words: καὶ ἡ γῆ τὸ σπήλαιον τῷ ἀπροσίτῳ προσάγει. The opening verses of the prooimion are inscribed on the scroll that Romanos is given to hold in iconography. See E. Catafygiotou Topping, "St Romanos the Melode: Prince of Byzantine Poets," *GrOrthThR* XXIV, No 1, 1979, 65-75; *eadem,* "St Romanos: Ikon of a Poet," *GrOrthThR* XII, No 1, 1966, 92-111.

[267] *On the Passion,* st. 5, 8, 10.

is not particularly prominent in the hymns studied up to this point, although in the hymn *On the Passion* Jews are described as 'ferocious people, thirsty for blood' and are compared to a lion that clawed the soul of Christ the lamb.[268]

Romanos did not simply make Mary the focus of the hymn *Mary at the Foot of the Cross* but, interpreting the Scriptures freely, he also made her the recipient of a promise by Jesus that she will be the first to know about the Resurrection.[269] However, in the first hymn *On the Resurrection* it is the myrrh-bearing women who witness his Resurrection and who bring the good news to the disciples.[270] The paradox of the Resurrection is associated with to the virginal birth and Christ is declared to be the Second Adam; by the same token the Virgin is declared to be the Second Eve. The Virgin's status is exalted to the point that the poet says that Eve became the servant of Mary.[271] In the second hymn *On the Resurrection,* Romanos relates the story of the Incarnation to the Resurrection and asserts Mary and Christ to be the typological counterparts of Eve and Adam.[272] With reference to the lament, it is interesting to note a lament that differs thematologically but which employs the same contrast between past and present:

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[268] *Ibid,* st. 13. Instances of anti-Jewish polemic are also evident in the hymns *On the Resurrection;* see for example the fourth hymn *On the Resurrection,* st. 8-10. The designation of Jews as ferocious and blood-thirsty beasts, evokes the imagery of accounts of martyrdom in the early Church and will be encountered as a standard feature of the laments of the post-Iconoclastic period.

[269] *Mary at the Foot of the Cross,* st.12, 2-3.

[270] *On the Resurrection I,* vol. IV, 380-421.

[271] *On the Resurrection II,* vol. IV, 430-451, st.20.

[272] Romanos elaborates the typological epithets of the Virgin in the third hymn *On the Nativity,* vol. II, 118-129.

it is Hades lamenting his destruction, recalling the happiness of the past in the third hymn *On the Resurrection.* [273]

The dramatic setting and the dialogue between the persons of the 'drama' are the most original and typical features of Romanos' work.[274] The dialogues between Abraham and Sarah, Mary and Christ, Mary Magdalen and Christ, the Virgin and the Angel in the Annunciation, represent instances that do not only achieve a dramatic effect but also reveal a dynamic relationship between the Biblical personages.[275] In the verses of Romanos poetry and theology converge in a distinct way. Moreover, Romanos as the poet who praised the Mother of God was to be included in the iconography of the feast of the veil of the Virgin, commonly called the *Pokrov.*[276]

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[273] *On the Resurrection III,* vol. IV, 460-481, st. 8 and *passim.* For the image of the destruction of the gates of Hades see S. Brock, "Some Aspects of Greek Words in Syriac," *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity,* London, 1984, IV 80-108, and esp. 98.

[274] According to Topping, "Romanos' interest in artistic form is manifested in the symmetry and intricacy of his kontakia, in which meter, diction, imagery, theme, and mood are *articulated with the precision of a mosaicist,*" (my emphasis) in "St Romanos the Melode: Prince of Byzantine Poets," 70. For a detailed study of Romanos' language see K.Mitsakis, *The Language of Romanos the Melodist,* Munich 1967. Romanos marked the change of attitude towards hymnography, renewing and enriching the tradition already shaped by Ephrem the Syrian. For the *kontakion* as a metrical sermon and the ill-defined boundaries between prose and poetry in early Christian hymnography see Mitsakis, "The Hymnography of the Greek Church," 39, 47-48.

[275] Catafygiotou Topping, "St Romanos the Melode: Prince of Byzantine Poets," 72.

[276] Moran (*Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Paintings,* 126-127) traces the development of the feast of the Veil of the Virgin in iconography and notes that "in Pokrov paintings the Nativity *kontakion* by Romanos is often inscribed on a roll in his hand."

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to trace not only the literary sources of the lament of the Virgin, but also to explain the rise of the lament in early Christian times. The lament of the Mother of God emerged as a result of the growing importance attached to the person of the Virgin. It is essential to emphasize that the cult of Mary sprung from the need of the first Christian thinkers to define the person of Christ, his natures and the way in which they coexisted within the historical person of Jesus. The theological concerns of the first Christian thinkers have been discussed with reference to the two matters that I consider to be the mainsprings of the rise of the lament, namely the veneration of the Virgin Mary and the debate over the suffering of God. The way in which the first Christian writers viewed Mary as well as the way in which she was portrayed in apocryphal writings of the early Byzantine period echo the development of her cult, as witnessed in the development of her feasts. Especially prominent in Syriac hymnography, which was a source of inspiration for Byzantine hymnographers and homilists is the figure of Mary, the Second Eve. The most celebrated poet of Byzantium, Romanos the Melode, writing in the sixth century, expressed in his *kontakia* the growing devotion to the Mother of God and the theological developments that had marked the fifth century.

The role of the Virgin was of crucial importance to the fuller understanding of the Incarnation of the Word. It was within this context that the epithet 'Theotokos' applied to Mary and questions regarding the suffering of God

came to the fore in the fifth century during the Nestorian controversy. The debate between the two patriarchs, Cyril and Nestorius, although Christological in its essence, focused on the designation of the Virgin as Theotokos and on the suffering of Christ. These two formulations recapitulated the paradoxical nature of Christianity as interpreted by the Alexandrian exegetical school in opposition to the literal approach of the Antiochenes. The term 'Theotokos' and the Twelfth Anathema of Cyril, that 'God has suffered in the flesh' would be ratified at the Council of Ephesus in 431.

In the centuries that followed the Council of Ephesus the Virgin appears on the one hand as the imposing patron saint of the imperial city who would shield it until its downfall[277] and on the other hand as the tender mother lamenting at the foot of the cross. Both images reflect the importance attached to the person of the Virgin during the period of the Nestorian controversy that concluded in the Council of Ephesus and which granted Mary the title Theotokos. The Virgin would retain both aspects of her cult as protectress and mother in subsequent centuries, although in the Iconoclastic period particular emphasis would be put on the human rather than the supernatural aspect of Mary's personality. Hence, the development of the cult of the Virgin should not be conceived of as evolving in a linear manner, one quality or attribute of the Virgin succeeding another, but as a gradual exploration of the person of the Virgin for the fuller comprehension of the

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[277] The depiction of the Virgin on lead seals dating to the pre-Iconoclastic period in which she is seen standing or *en buste* holding Christ in front of her in a roundel or in the type of the *Hodegetria* recalls her attributes as the protectress of Constantinople; see N. Oikonomides, *Byzantine Lead Seals,* Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C., 1985, 10.

Christian mystery. The emphasis placed on the Incarnation and the suffering of Christ during the Nestorian controversy resulted in the emergence in literature of the Virgin lamenting at the foot of the cross whom we found in the hymns of Romanos and that would be revived as a theme of the next and last Christological debate in the Byzantine Church: Iconoclasm.

CHAPTER III

THE PLACE OF THE VIRGIN IN THE ICONOCLASTIC CONTROVERSY

Introduction

In the previous chapter I focused on the cult of the Virgin and on the issue of theopaschism in order to explain the rise of the Marian lament in the fifth and sixth centuries. In this chapter I shall concentrate on the period of the last Christological debate of the Byzantine Church, namely Iconoclasm, leaving aside the intervening period of the sixth and seventh centuries.[278] Admittedly Iconoclasm is a period that suffers from what Brown termed as a 'crisis of over-explanation'.[279] My intention is not to add yet another interpretation to the numerous explanations that already exist.[280] The present chapter will focus on

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[278] The reason that dictated this choice was the existence of comprehensive studies both of the cult of Mary and of the issue of theopaschism in the period in question by Averil Cameron and Anna Kartsonis respectively. For the cult of Mary in the sixth and seventh centuries see Averil Cameron "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople: A City Finds its Symbol," *JThS* XXIX, 1978, 79-108; *eadem,* "A Nativity Poem of the Sixth Century A.D.," *Classical Philology* 79, 1979, 222-232; *eadem,* "The Virgin's Robe: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84, 1979, 3-35. For the issue of theopaschism with special reference to the work of Anastasius Sinaites see A. Kartsonis, *Anastasis. The Making of an Image,* Princeton, 1986; *eadem,* "The Emancipation of the Crucifixion," *Byzance et les Images,* Paris, 1994, 151-187.

[279] P. Brown, "A Dark Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *EHR* LXXXVIII, 1973, 1-34, repr. in Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity,* London, 1982, 251-301 and esp. 254.

[280] For some recent studies on the issue of Byzantine Iconoclasm see D. Turner, "The Origins and Accession of Leo V (813-820)," *JÖB* 40, 1990, 171-203. From an art-historical perspective but with an insight into literary texts, see the studies by R.

Iconoclasm as a Christological rather than a political or social controversy. The socio-political aspect of the complex phenomenon of Iconoclasm will be omitted not because it is considered to be of lesser importance but because it cannot help us in our investigation of this obscure territory, the place of the Mother of God in the Iconoclastic controversy.

The period of Iconoclasm is perhaps the most complicated and controversial period of Byzantine history. Scholarly views on Byzantine Iconoclasm alter [illegible] as new evidence and interpretations are set forth by modern researchers.[281] Scholarship today does away with the absolute distinctions

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Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and its Icons*, London, 1985; *idem, Painting the Soul. Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds,* London, 1997. K. Parry (*Depicting the Word. Byzantine Iconophile Thought of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries*, Leiden, New York, Köln, 1996) offers a modern theological interpretation of Iconoclasm concentrating on the theological issues involved in the cult of icons. See also J.M. Sansterre, "La parole, le texte et l'image selon les auteurs byzantins des époques iconoclastes et posticonoclastes," *Testo e imagine nell'alto medioevo, Settimane* 41, Spoleto 1994, 197-240; M.J. Mondzain, *Image, icône, économie. Les sources byzantines de l'imaginaire contemporain*, Paris, 1996.

[281] In this respect the study by Gero (S. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Leo III with Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources,* CSCO 346, Louvain, 1973; *idem, Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Constantine V with Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources,* CSCO 384, Louvain, 1977) that brought to the attention of researchers the evidence deriving from oriental sources was very useful. Note also the difference of approach between the study by E. Kitzinger ("The Cult of Icons in the Age Before Iconoclasm," *DOP* 8, 1954, 83-150) with its distinct emphasis on religious practice and the idea of 'popular religion' and the recent article by Averil Cameron ("The Language of Images: The Rise of Icons and Christian Representation," *The Church and the Arts*, D. Wood (ed.), Oxford, 1992, 1-42) in which the author

of previous generations, entering into more detailed studies and perceiving Iconoclasm as of greater complexity.[282] To summarize the basic events that marked the Iconoclastic controversy in Byzantium is unnecessary since there already exist detailed studies on the subject; moreover, such a summary would fall outside the scope of the present study.[283]

The place of the Mother of God in the Iconoclastic period is a subject that has received little attention and about which no definitive conclusions have been drawn as yet. Usually the veneration of the Virgin is studied together with the veneration of the saints and their relics since this is the formula employed in the literary sources.[284] As far as modern scholars are concerned some hold that the Theotokos was greatly venerated by the Iconoclasts while others maintain that

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interprets the rise of the cult of images in terms of an evolution and redefinition of the cognitive system of Byzantine society.

[282] For a concise account of the various explanations of Iconoclasm see Brown, "A Dark Age Crisis," 251-301 and esp. 251-254 and Averil Cameron, "The Language of Images," 18-20.

[283] See above. For a detailed study of the relationship between Byzantium and the Arabs see A.Grabar, *L'Iconoclasme byzantin. Dossier archéologique,* Paris, 1957; P.J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople,* Oxford, 1958, and for different aspects of the Iconoclastic period the volume of collected essays edited by A.Bryer and J. Herrin, *Iconoclasm,* Birmingham, 1977.

[284] Parry, *Depicting the Word,* 191-201; J. Wortley, "Iconoclasm and Leipsanoclasm: Leo III, Constantine V and the Relics," *ByzFor* VIII, 1982, 253-279. For the similarity of perception and function between relics, saints and icons see Belting, *Likeness and Presence,* 59-61 and Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis," 266-284. However, Belting (*op.cit.,* 58-59) points to the difference between the iconography of the Virgin and that of the saints.

her cult was rejected along with the cult of icons and relics of saints.[285] Parry's views on the issue are expressed in a rather confusing way. Citing Averil Cameron's article on "The Theotokos in Sixth-Century Constantinople", Parry attempts to find an explanation for the excessive veneration of Mary by the Iconoclasts! In his words: "Perhaps the exalted status accorded to the Mother of God *by the Iconoclasts* should be seen in relation to her special cult as protector of the city of Constantinople. In his homilies on the Mother of God, *the Patriarch Germanos* refers to Mary in highly exalted terms, emphasising her role as intercessor in the life of every Christian" [286] (my italics). There is no doubt that he Parry knows that Germanos was not an Iconoclast, but in his discussion . seems to be establishing Iconoclastic positions while drawing arguments from Iconophile sources. The above quotation demonstrates his confusion in so far as the specific matter is concerned. Although bringing interesting themes to the fore, such as the veneration of the Virgin and its relationship to the cult of the saints and their relics, Parry fails to present them within the framework of any particular argument. Moreover, the fact that Parry deals with the complicated issues of the veneration and the intercession of the Theotokos, the saints, the cult of relics and

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[285] Two representative examples are George Ostrogorsky and Kenneth Parry. Ostrogorsky considers that the Iconoclasts were against the cult of the Mother of God. His views on the issue are elaborated in the volume of collected essays in Serbian; G. Ostrogorsky, *O Verovanjima i Shvatanjima Vizantinaca*, Belgrade, 1970. I would like to thank Sanya Mesanovic from the Institute of Byzantine Research in Belgrade who helped me with the translation of the Serbian text. On the other hand, Parry (*Depicting the Word*, 191-192) in his confusing nineteenth chapter presumes, on grounds that are not stated clearly, that the Iconoclasts were accused of excessive veneration of Mary.

[286] Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 191.

the cult of icons within the limited space of one chapter does not help him to illuminate his subject and especially the place of Mary in the Iconoclastic controversy. It has to be noted that Parry's confusion mirrors the disordered state of research, at least in respect of the place of the Virgin in the Iconoclastic controversy. It is a fact that no unchallenged conclusion has yet been reached regarding the opposing views of Mary taken by the two sides in the last Christological debate in Byzantium. This is the very issue that will be discussed in the present chapter.

Sources and Interpretations

The impression one gains from sources contemporaneous with the Iconoclastic period that refer to the Mother of God is rather a confusing one since both sides claim to be 'orthodox' on the basis of virtually the same arguments, in other words the correct understanding of the Incarnation. Each side accuses the other of being a follower of Nestorius, Eutyches, and such others, using the same terminology but obviously interpreting it differently. With reference to the Virgin we encounter statements that can be taken to declare the unconditional devotion of the Iconoclasts to the Mother of God. On the other hand, the Iconophile response to those statements reveals a clear mistrust of the sincerity of them. Later we shall examine closely the manner in which each side accuses the other of disrespect towards the Mother of God. Whatever the final conclusion, it is clear that the veneration of the Virgin attracted the attention of both sides and was a bone of contention throughout the controversy.

Chronicles and Acts of Oecumenical Councils

Let us first examine the evidence provided by historiographical sources. There is no uniformity in the Iconoclastic policies enforced by imperial authority during the Iconoclastic period. It is well known that the first Iconoclast emperor Leo III (717- 741) in his early years presented himself as a supporter of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. Once he had ascended the throne of Constantinople he moved gradually towards Iconoclasm with hesitant steps.[287] As we shall see in the

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[287] It should also be noted that since icons were not yet identified with Orthodoxy and the theology of images was still in the making the Definition of the Council of 754 is strictly speaking free of anti-Chalcedonian statements. It was only after the restoration of icons that Iconoclasm would be considered as a heresy on the grounds of misinterpreting incarnational theology as defined in the pre-Iconoclastic Oecumenical Councils. For the beginning of the controversy and the legend of the destruction of the image of Christ above the Chalke Gate of the palace, see M.-F. Auzépy, "La destruction de l'icône du Christ de la Chalcé par Léon III: propagande ou réalité?", *B* LX, 1990, 445-492 and esp. 480-492 where the author after a detailed comparative analysis of the sources explains how the legend came into being after the Empress Irene had raised an image of Christ over the Chalke Gate. Cf. C.Mango, *The Brazen House: A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople,* Copenhagen, 1959, 170-174. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Leo III,* 141-142 and 212-217 (appendix 5B: The Destruction of the Chalke Image); W. Hörandner, "Visuelle Poesie in Byzanz," *JÖB* 40, 1990, 1-42 and esp. 13-15; Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century,* 84-91; Cormack, *Writing in Gold,* 111 ff.; M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium, 600-1025,* Hampshire and London, 1996, 139 ff.; Averil Cameron, "Images of Authority," 3-35; J.F. Haldon, "Some Remarks on the Background to the Iconoclastic Controversy," *ByzSlav* 37-38, 1976-1977, 161-184; P.J. Alexander, "An Ascetic Sect of Iconoclasts in Seventh-Century Armenia," *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire,* VII, London, 1978, 151-160. Cf. K. Ringrose, "Monks and Society in Iconoclastic Byzantium," *BS/EB* 6, 1979, 130-151 and esp. 149; N. Garsoïan, "Byzantine Heresy. A Reinterpretation," *DOP* 25, 1971, 85-113.

course of the present study the Iconoclasts repeatedly declared their belief in the canons of the Oecumenical Councils although their declarations have to be treated with a certain degree of caution. The Iconoclasts repeatedly declared their belief in the Chalcedonian Creed as well as in the Mother of God but resented the consequence of these beliefs, namely the possibility of the representation of the divine in matter.

Most of our sources refer to the period after 744. However, Theophanes refers repeatedly to the Mother of God and her intercession before the endorsement of Leo's Iconoclastic policy. Apart from the few references to the Virgin as protectress of Byzantium during the reign of Heraclius, Theophanes refers to the intercession of the Mother of God during the war of Leo III against the Arabs in the years 717 and 718.[288] In August 717 the Byzantines managed to frustrate the fleet of the Arab caliph Maslama with the aid of Greek fire while in the following year -after a particularly severe winter- "many calamities befell them [the Arabs] at that time and made them learn by experience that God and the all-holy Virgin, the Mother of God, protect this city and the Christian Empire..."[289]

Leo was succeeded on the imperial throne by his son Constantine V (741-775) who is known as the most steadfast opponent of images both in theory and in practice. The Iconoclastic council of 754 presided over by Theodosius, bishop

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[288] C. Mango and R. Scott (eds.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813,* Oxford, 1997, 544-546, [henceforth abbreviated as Theophanes (Mango)], = Theophanes (de Boor), I 395-398.

[289] Transl. Mango and Scott. Theophanes (Mango), 546= (de Boor), I 397-398.

of Ephesus, was summoned by the emperor in order to invest Iconoclasm with the authority of oecumenical recognition.[290] If we compare the views expressed in the Πεῦσεις of Constantine V and those set forth in the definition of the Iconoclastic council of 754, it becomes evident that the views of the emperor were tempered by the assembly in which 338 bishops participated.[291] The emphasis on spiritual worship deriving from Jn. 4:24 is attested in the first tome of the Iconoclastic *Horos* quoted in II Nicaea.[292] Man is said to have been seduced and, from the exalted worship that befits God, to have fallen to the

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[290] When Leo III asked Patriarch Germanos to accept his Iconoclastic views the latter told the emperor to summon a council to determine the issue. In the council of 754 Patriarch Germanos was anathematized along with John of Damascus -the so-called Mansur- and George of Cyprus. The proceedings of the Iconoclastic council have not survived but they can be reconstructed from the minutes of II Nicaea (787) in the sixth session of which the Definition of 754 was read by Gregory, bishop of Neocaesarea, and refuted section by section by the synod. For the anathematization of the three iconodules, see J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, vol. XIII, Graz, 1960, 356 ff. (henceforth cited as Mansi); M.V. Anastos, "The Argument for Iconoclasm as Presented by the Iconoclastic Council of 754," *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of A.M. Friend*, K. Weitzmann (ed.), Princeton, 1955, 177-188. The absence of a patriarch at the council of 754 is particularly emphasized by Theophanes (de Boor), I, 427 ff.; cf. E. J. Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, London, 1930, 46.

[291] Text in H. Hennephof (ed.), *Textus Byzantinos Iconomachiam Pertinentes in Usum Academicum*, Leiden, 1969, 52-57. See also Anastos, "The Argument for Iconoclasm," 177-188; J. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford, 1986, 39-40. Hussey correctly notes that the presence of the bishops was rather a political gesture and that it did not necessarily imply their Iconoclastic beliefs.

[292] Jn 4:24, "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." For the Iconoclastic *Horos* see Mansi XIII, 216.

degrading and material worship of creatures.[293] Clearly opposing the Iconoclastic statement, Theodosius of Amorium declared in the proceedings of the Seventh Oecumenical Council: "I accept that the face of Christ and of the Holy Theotokos can be depicted in matter. In the same way I accept that we should allow the images of saints and martyrs, so as to acknowledge their fights and deeds."[294] Iconoclasts rejected the veneration of images on Christological grounds, accusing the Iconophiles of being either Nestorians or Monophysites, and in any case claiming that they distorted the doctrine of the Incarnation.[295] As we shall see below, the Mother of God became the symbol of Orthodoxy upheld by the Iconophiles precisely because she embodied the principles of incarnational theology on the basis of which the veneration of images was defended.

The prohibition of the veneration of images was extended to the Mother of God and the saints although in these cases there was no issue of divine nature

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[293] Mansi XIII, 225 D, 229 A, D, E.

[294] Mansi XII, 1014 C-D, Theodosius pleads with the saints to intercede on his behalf to God so as to find mercy on the Day of Judgement. "I accept, says Theodosius, in churches all icons of the saints and of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the holy Theotokos made out of any material, whether gold or silver and of any colour; so that his [Christ's] economy according to the flesh may be known to all. In the same sense I accept the depiction of the deeds of the saintly and renowned apostles, of the prophets and the martyrs, so that their achievements and their fights shall be known in *σύντομος γραφή* for the stimulation and the edification of the people, and especially of the most simple ones."

[295] Mansi XIII, 241 E, 244 D, 245 D; Anastos, "The Argument for Iconoclasm," 179, n. 16; concerning the accusation of Arianism see Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai,* 25-26, 68-69 and notes on chapters 1, 7 and 10.

involved, as in the case of Christ.[296] In his writings John of Damascus accuses the Iconoclasts of not merely rejecting the veneration of icons of Christ (something that might have made sense) but, by extending the prohibition to the Virgin and the saints, also proving that they reject the honour that is ascribed to them; something that nobody has ever dared commit since the beginning of the world.[297] For the Iconoclasts, the Virgin was thought to be beyond the status of humanity since she was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and through her the unapproachable light shone forth.[298] So, how could one dare to depict in the vulgar art of the Hellenes the being that is higher than the heavens and more holy than the cherubim?[299] The obvious assumption would be to consider the Iconoclasts as faithful devotees of the Virgin Mary.[300] It would be necessary, however, at this point to examine the way in which the Iconophiles refuted the Iconoclastic claims.

In refuting these statements the Iconoclasts resorted to encomia in their desire to deceive the simple-minded and trap them in their own false dogma

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[296] Mansi XIII, 272 A, B and D.

[297] John of Damascus, *Contra Imaginum* I, Kotter, (ed.), *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. III, Berlin, New York, 1975, I.19, 94-95. All three orations on the veneration of icons are published in Kotter III. Numbers following the number of the oration refer to paragraphs and are followed by the page number.

[298] Mansi XIII, 277 C.

[299] *Ibid*, 277 D.

[300] See for example Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 191.

(*ματαιοφροσύνην*).[301] Clearly the encomium of the Theotokos voiced by the Iconoclasts did not impress them: "But those who are wise and are not wicked [the Iconophiles],...., they know how to honour truly in words and encomia the Undefiled and Unblemished and truly and eminently the Theotokos and the saints..."[302] What follows is the defence of the matter with which the Mother of God and the saints are depicted. Matter may well have been sinful and used in the veneration of idols but that is not a reason for us to reject it completely and not use it to good purpose, say the Iconophiles.[303] Because if we are to accept this assertion, then we should reject the use of holy vestments and vessels as well.[304] Since we are humans, perceiving reality through our senses, we need material things to recognise and remind us of the sacred and reverent tradition.[305] The defence of matter is virtually the fundamental argument on which is based the refutation of Iconoclastic arguments. The knowledge of God is treated as an issue at the end of the fourth tome: according to the Iconoclasts, God should be

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[301] Mansi XIII, 277 E; the word *ματαιοφροσύνη* means literally vaingloriousness, or vanity of thought and it was first used of heresy by Epiphanius of Salamis. See s.v. in Lampe, *PGL*, 834.

[302] Mansi XIII, 277 E-280 A.

[303] *Ibid*, 280 A, B.

[304] John of Damascus maintained that because of the Incarnation the human race was saved from death and our nature was led to incorruption. For this reason, he says, we celebrate the death of the saints, we build churches in their honour and depict them in icons. See *Contra Imaginum* II.10-11, 100-101. John says also that if Iconoclasts want to be in accord with their doctrine they should by no means celebrate the feasts of the saints. See *Contra Imaginum* I.21, 108-109, *Εἰ ναοὺς ἐγείρεις ἁγίοις θεοῦ, καὶ τὰ τούτων ἔγειρε τρόπαια...*

[305] Mansi XIII, 280 B, C.

perceived and venerated through faith, that is through hearing, whereas for the Iconophiles flesh and matter have both been sanctified because of the Incarnation of the Word of God.[306] Matter has not only been assumed in the Incarnation but it has also been taken to heaven in the Ascension. The Iconophiles held that Christ ascended to heaven in his human body and that is how he is now in heaven; and also that is how he will appear in the Last Judgement.[307] Elaborating on the relationship between matter, sin and the Incarnation, they add that flesh for us humans is linked to sin, but for Christ flesh is linked with suffering, not with sinfulness.

The Iconophile bishops of Nicaea II refuted the Iconoclastic claims on the basis of the theology of images (i.e. that when we venerate icons we do not venerate the inanimate matter but the person depicted and hence the honour is transmitted from the icon to the prototype) and of patristic authority.[308] Perhaps it is not accidental that at this point the Iconophiles quote Cyril of Alexandria on the importance of the Incarnation.[309] As we saw in the previous chapter, Cyril was the one who, following Athanasius of Alexandria, elaborated on the doctrine of deification with reference to the Virgin and the suffering of

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[306] *Ibid*, 288 A-D.

[307] *Ibid*, 288 E, 289 A. However, note that the Iconoclasts also defended the deification of matter, albeit in a different context and towards a contrary end; see Mansi XIII, 341 E.

[308] Both sides drew on patristic authority in order to support their views. See *ibid*, 333. For the florilegia compiled during the Iconoclastic controversy, see A. Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and its Archetype*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies XXXIV, Washington D.C., 1996, 31-37 and 227-233.

[309] Mansi XIII, 289 A.

Christ. In the *Acts* of Nicaea II, this doctrine is employed in defence of matter: because the Word of God was made man, the human race was reborn.[310] We no longer belong to death but to the Word who gives life to everything.[311]

In the anathemas of the 754 council the Iconoclasts anathematize all those who do not confess that the Ever-Virgin Mary is indeed the Theotokos and above all created and uncreated nature and who do not seek her intercession, though she has the freedom of speech in front of the one who was born of her.[312] The same honour is shown by the Iconoclasts to the saints.[313] It is fairly evident that the Iconoclastic statements do not make any direct anti-Theotokos asserions; on the contrary, they repeat the decisions of the six oecumenical councils and specifically anathematize those who do not acknowledge Mary's exalted status. However, the way in which the Iconoclastic confessions of faith were refuted by the opposite side shows that they were loaded with meaning which the modern scholar can only infer by reading between the lines or to be on safer ground, by turning to other sources.

The picture becomes even more complicated when one considers the Iconophiles. In his dogmatic writings, John of Damascus warns against the

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[310] Cf. the two orations by John of Damascus against the Nestorians (*De Fide Contra Nestorianos* and *Contra Nestorianos*) and the oration against the Manichaeans (*Contra Manichaeos*) in Kotter IV, 238-253, 263-288 and 351-398.

[311] Mansi XIII, 289 B; cf. 289 D, *...παθῶν ἀπήλλαχθαι τὸν Χριστὸν μετα την ἀνάστασιν ἀποδεικνύουσι, καὶ ἡμᾶς ὁδηγοῦσιν ὡς συμμόρφους γενομένους τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ...*

[312] *Ibid*, 345 A-B.

[313] *Ibid*, 348 D-E.

excessive honour ascribed to Mary, emphasizing that she did not give birth to the Godhead but to the incarnate Word of God and therefore she should be honoured according to the flesh.[314] This position is supported by Patriarch Germanos in his epistles to the bishops of Asia Minor.[315] The view taken by the two theoreticians of the Iconophile camp leads to the assumption that for the Iconophiles excess honour meant negation of the cult. In other words, the Iconoclasts, through over-glorifying her, made the Virgin even more remote and inaccessible, so causing breach between humanity and divinity. The same is true of Christ whose depiction Iconoclasts opposed on the grounds that it emphasized his humanity at the expense of his divinity. Their understanding of the Incarnation ignored its soteriological significance which could be perceived only by emphasizing the perfection of Christ's two natures. Christ's Incarnation had a twofold consequence: first, the deification of matter that was assumed by the Word of God entering into the womb of Mary and second, the salvation of mankind through the defeat of death. In rejecting the sanctity of matter (for they held it to be unworthy to depict the divine) the Iconoclasts were accused of rejecting also the salvation of mankind.

Theodore the Stoudite defends the cult of the Mother of God that in so many instances is identified with the worship of her icon. At the same time he

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[314] John of Damascus, *Contra Imaginum* III.41, 142. Rather different, however, is his approach in *Expositio Fidei* and in his Marian homilies, for which see below.

[315] Germanos I of Constantinople, *Epistola Germani ad Johannem episcopum Synadensem*, PG 98, cols. 157 D-161 A; Ostrogorsky, *O Verovanjima*, 39-40; Parry, *Depicting the Word*, 197-198.

answers the Iconoclastic charges of idolatry directed against the Iconophiles.[316] According to Theodore, Christ was the natural image of the mother that gave him birth; hence, Christ has two natures, one divine that derives from his Father and therefore uncircumscribable and the other human, deriving from his mother, the Virgin Mary, and thus circumscribable.[317] Denying the circumscribability of his human nature means denying nature itself.[318]

In the writings of John of Damascus, we find an interesting association of the Virgin with the Passion and the Lord. First, the author sets out to prove the function of icons. By way of example he cites the individual who, on seeing an icon of the Crucifixion, is reminded of the Passion of the Lord and falls on his knees; he does not venerate the matter but the person depicted. Similarly when we venerate the Gospel or the Cross we do not venerate the matter of which they are

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[316] On the theological views of Theodore the Stoudite on images see V. Grumel, "L'Iconologie de saint Théodore Studite," *EO* 20, 1921, 257-268.

[317] Theodore Stoudite, *Antirrheticus* III, PG 99, col. 417 A, *Οὐκοῦν ἔστι τεχνητὴ εἰκὼν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὡς ἔστιν εἰκὼν φυσικὴ τῆς τεκούσης αὐτὸν μητρός...* Cf. Theodore Stoudite, *Quaestiones Aliquae Propositae Iconomachis*, PG 99, cols. 480-481. For discussion see J. Meyendorff, "L'image du Christ d'après Théodore Studite," *Synthronon, Art et Archéologie de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age*, Paris, 1968, 115-117.

[318] Theodore Stoudite, *Antirrheticus* III, PG 99, col. 416 D, where Theodore asserts that Christ was made of two natures, human and divine, and so is to be identified by two characteristic properties. According to one nature he is uncircumscribable and according to the other circumscribable. Denying the characteristic property of any one nature you also deny the nature (*ousia*) characterised by that property.

made but what they represent, what they symbolise.[319] As John of Damascus puts it, the Mother of God functions as it were like an icon: "Just like icons, so with the Mother of God. Because the honour given to her is transmitted to the one that took his flesh from her."[320]

This formulation by John reappears in the *Antirrheticus* by Theodore the Stoudite who reiterates it to answer the charges of idolatry brought against the Iconophiles.[321] Accordingly, the depiction and veneration of the Virgin does not mean that we venerate her as a pagan goddess but as the Theotokos who bore in her womb the Word of God.[322] Similarly, Theodore defines and defends the saints as well as liturgical objects.[323] The relationship of the person worshipped to his or her icon is evident in the sermon of Theodore the Stoudite on the Dormition of the Virgin in which he pays respect to her icon, perceiving the radiance of the Theotokos shining from it.[324] And he adds: "even though the all-pure dove has flown away, she [the Virgin] does not cease to protect mankind."[325] Theodore

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[319] John of Damascus, *Expositio Fidei*, in Kotter II, 89.38-42, 207 where John affirms the importance of iconography for educational purposes.

[320] *Ibid*, 89.43-44, 208 *Ὡσαύτως καὶ τῆς θεομήτορος· ἡ γὰρ εἰς αὐτην τιμη εἰς τον ἐξ αὐτῆς σαρκωθέντα ἀνάγεται.*

[321] Theodore Stoudite, *Antirrheticus* III, PG 99, col. 433 A- 433 B.

[322] *Idem, Adversus Iconomachos* VII, PG 99, col. 488 D-489 A, "...and so with the Mother of God. By making and venerating the icon of the Virgin we neither confess her nor pay respect to her in the way of the Greeks, but as the Mother of God."

[323] *Ibid*, cols. 489 A- 489 B. In this passage emphasis is given to the relics of the passion of the Lord that are symbolised in the liturgical objects.

[324] Theodore Stoudite, Oration V, *In Dormitionem sanctae Dominae nostrae Deiparae*, PG 99, col. 721 B.

[325] *Ibid*, col. 721 B.

asserts that the Mother of God, while no longer with us in the flesh, remains by our side in spirit and, fending off the demons, mediates with the Lord on behalf of mankind.[326]

If we now turn to other historiographical sources we find that Theophanes draws attention to events that occurred during the Iconoclastic period and in which the Virgin played a central role. The first such event described by the chronicler signals the opening of the controversy and although it is difficult to attribute historical realism to this account, it is still interesting to note that the cult of icons and the cult of the Virgin are closely associated The event recorded by Theophanes, and repeated in other accounts, is the well known story of the siege of Nicaea.[327] During the procession of icons around the walls of the city, Constantine, a general of Artabasdos, noticed an icon of the Virgin and threw a stone at it; the icon fell to the ground and he trod it underfoot.[328] A little later he had a vision in which the Virgin warned him that what he had done had put his head at risk.[329] True enough, next day the Arabs attacked the city, he rushed to the walls, for he was a brave soldier, and was killed by a stone that smashed his head.[330] Theophanes

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[326] *Ibid*, col. 721 B - 721 C.

[327] Theophanes (Mango), 560-561= (de Boor), I 406, 1-25.

[328] "A certain Constantine, however, who was the *στράτωρ* of Artabasdos, on seeing an image of the Theotokos that had been set up, picked up a stone and threw it at her. He broke the image and trampled upon it when it had fallen down." Theophanes (Mango), 560 = (de Boor), I 406, 5-7.

[329] "He then saw in a vision the Lady standing beside him and saying to him: 'See, what a brave thing you have done to me! Verily, upon your head you have done it'." Theophanes (Mango), 560 = (de Boor), I 406, 7-10.

[330] Theophanes (Mango), 560 = (de Boor), I 406, 10-14.

finishes his story by recounting that Constantine was not only an Iconoclast but moreover he rejected the intercession of the Virgin and the saints and the cult of their relics.[331]

The same chronicler also records two incidents that happened in the reign of Constantine V. In the first, Theophanes notes that the Patriarch Anastasios placed his hand upon the relic of the Holy Cross and vowed before the people that Constantine had told him to believe that Mary gave birth not to God but to a mere man. For Mary gave birth to Christ as his own mother had given birth to him.[332] The same incident is recorded in the chronicles of George Monachos, Leo Grammaticus, Cedrenus-Skylitzes and Zonaras, sources that are themselves dependent on Theophanes.[333]

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[331] "Not only was the impious in error concerning the relative worship of the holy icons, but also concerning the intercession of the all-pure Theotokos and all the saints, and he abominated their relics like his mentors, the Arabs." Theophanes (Mango), 561 and *n.* 16 = (de Boor), I 406, 22-25. See also, Cedrenos-Skylitzes II, 3.

[332] "...For Mary gave birth to Him just as my mother Mary gave birth to me." Theophanes (Mango), 576 = (de Boor), I 415, 24-29.

[333] Georgius Monachus, *Chronicon*, C. de Boor (ed.), BSGR, vol. II, Stuttgart, 1978, 756; in the account by George the Monk the patriarch is said to have placed his hand on the relic of the True Cross and to have told the people that the emperor considered that Christ was not God and therefore he did not look upon Mary as the Theotokos. As soon as the emperor heard of the incident he was very angry. George continues his narrative by describing the punishment of the patriarch who was eventually imprisoned. The emperor then sent a delegation of patricians to Anastasius to ask him what he thought about their beliefs and when the patriarch agreed that their beliefs were right they ridiculed him even more, anathematized him and cut off his head. The account is obviously biased and contains fictional elements, but it is still interesting to note how George the Monk treats the incident described by other chroniclers in a few lines. See

The emperor is reported by the chronicler to have asked the patriarch whether it would matter if the Theotokos was called Christotokos. The Patriarch Constantine II,[334] utterly shocked, replied: "Mercy, my lord; do not let this thought even cross your mind. Can you not see that Nestorius is rebuked and anathematized by the whole Church?" And the emperor replied that he asked only because he wanted to tempt him.[335]

The period of the first Iconoclasm and especially the reign of Constantine V was undoubtedly a time of great importance to the Iconoclastic controversy. In the Iconophile sources it is painted in dark colours.[336] In his chronicle George the Monk describes Constantine as the heir to the impiety of his father, the best tool of the devil who was his father and teacher.[337] The imagery employed in the description of the emperor and the improbable exaggerations into which the

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for example Leo Grammaticus, 182 (see below); Cedrenus-Skylitzes II, 4-5; Zonaras III, 266.

[334] The name of the patriarch is attested in Theophanes (Mango), 591-592 = (de Boor), I 428. The ascension of Constantine II to the patriarchal throne is recorded in George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 755, 2-5; Zonaras, III, 270, 10-11.

[335] Theophanes (Mango), 601-602 = (de Boor), I, 435,10-14. Also recorded in Zonaras III, 273-274.

[336] See the analysis by P. Speck, *Artabasdos, der rechtgläubige Vorkämpfer der göttlichen Lechen,* Bonn, 1981, *passim.*

[337] See for example the account of George the Monk in which we find perhaps the most extensive references to Constantine's 'hatred' of the Mother of God. George's chronicle was written during the reign of Michael III (842-867); it covers the period up to the beginning of the reign of Michael III and reflects the monastic outlook of its author. George the Monk, *Chronikon,* 750-751. Cf. Speck, *Kaiser Konstantin VI,* 54, 426-8 and *n.* 25 where the author refers extensively to the hatred of monks such as Plato of Sakkoudion, towards Constantine V, and *passim.*

author often lapses make his chronicle an unreliable source. But, however exaggerated the account may be, the references by George to the Virgin should be taken into consideration, albeit with due caution. After all, what matters more than the event itself is the way in which it was perceived, understood and recorded by the historiographer.

According to George, Constantine rejected the veneration of the relics of the saints and did not believe in the intercession of saints.[338] Moreover, the emperor held that no one should ask for the intercession of the Virgin since she was unable to help any person and no one should even call her Theotokos. And then taking a purse filled with gold and showing it to the people he asked them what it was worth. And when those present answered 'a lot' he emptied it and asked them again what it was now worth. And they answered 'nothing'. So, he said, in the same way Mary (because the atheist would not even call her Theotokos) while she was carrying Jesus in her womb was honourable; but after she had given birth to him did not differ from any other woman.[339] To this degrading of Virgin, George answered sharply and provokingly saying that the *σαρακηνόπιστος και ἰουδαιόφρων* Constantine was not a Christian but rather a Paulician or even a pagan, a servant of demons who was sacrificing humans.[340] In charging the Iconoclast emperor with paganism, George called Constantine the new Julian and said that instead of venerating the Mother of God and all the saints, he was worshipping Aphrodite and Dionysus to

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[338] George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 751, 5-6.

[339] *Ibid*, 751, 7-16. See also Ostrogorsky, *O Verovanjima*, 41, *n*.65.

[340] George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 751, 17-20.

whom he sacrificed children at night.[341] George repeats the dialogue between the emperor and the patriarch recorded by Theophanes and mentioned above. The same incident is recorded in the *Vita* of Nicetas Mediciensis. [342]

The hostility shown by Constantine V towards the cult of images, the Theotokos and the saints is attested also by the Iconophile work *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum.*[343] The author of the work, written approximately ten years after the death of Constantine and certainly before 787, states that Constantine decreed that all exarchs under his authority, were to sign and swear that they would reject not only the veneration of images but also the intercession of the Theotokos and the saints. According to the same source, Constantine did not believe that the Mother of God possessed any influence after her death.[344] He also rejected the use of the term 'saint' and the mediation of the saints on behalf of mankind, saying that in fact they saved only themselves from damnation.[345] The author vigorously responds to the claims of the emperor and asserts the intercession both of the Virgin and of the saints.[346] The argumentation set forth in

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[341] *Ibid*, 752, 1-11.

[342] De S. Niceta Confessore, Hegumeno Mediciensi in Bithynia, *Acta Sanctorum*, Aprilis, Tom. I, Tertia Aprilis, 255-266.

[343] For discussion of the authorship and date of the text see M.-F. Auzépy, "L'Adversus Constantinum Caballinum et Jean de Jérusalem," *Stephanos, ByzSlav* 56, 1995, 323-338. *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, PG 95, cols. 309-344.

[344] *Ibid*, col. 337 C, *την παναγίαν Θεοτόκον ὠνόμαζε, μετα θάνατον αὐτην βοηθεῖν μη δυναμένην· και τους ἁγίους ἀποστόλους ... πρεσβείαν μη κεκτημένους*..

[345] *Ibid*, col. 337 C-D.

[346] *Ibid*, col. 340A-B.

the text, however biased, bears witness to the importance of the issue of the cult of the Virgin during the Iconoclastic period.[347]

Leo Grammaticus, too, paints Constantine's reign in sombre colours, only because everyone else does. The emperor himself is described as the offspring of the serpent.[348] The first thing that Leo records about the reign of Constantine is that, to a greater extent even than his father, Constantine distanced himself from God, the Virgin Mary and the saints of God.[349] The preoccupation of the emperor was with magic and divination as well as with horse races and hunting.[350] Leo repeats both the claim that the emperor did not accept the intercession of the Virgin, and the story of the purse.[351] He also relates the story of the Patriarch Anastasius, his contribution to the condemnation of the emperor by the people and his punishment by the emperor after Artabasdos was defeated.[352] In his account of the closing years of Constantine, Leo says that the emperor repented for his lack of faith in the Mother of God. On his deathbed, the chronicler says, Constantine confessed that from this moment onwards he would honour and glorify Mary as the Mother of God.[353] The emperor's repentance heightens the effect of the account of his rejection of the Virgin Mary. The chronicler John

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[347] D. Turner, "The Politics of Despair: The Plague of 746-747 and Iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire," *The Annual of the British School of Archaeology at Athens*, 85, 1990, 419-434; Ostrogorsky, *O veravanjima*, 42-43.

[348] Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, 181, 2-4.

[349] *Ibid*, 181, 5-7.

[350] *Ibid*, 181, 7-10.

[351] *Ibid*, 181, 14-22 and 182, 1-2.

[352] *Ibid*, 182-186.

[353] *Ibid*, 189.15-190.1. Cf. Theophanes (Mango), 619-620 and *n.* 3 = (de Boor), I 448.

Skylitzes records the restoration of the church of the Virgin at Blachernae, mentioning in particular that when the workmen removed the 'chrisma' [rendering] of the wall they found an icon of the Virgin holding the Child which has remained intact since the reign of Copronymus.[354] This fact attests both to the destruction of icons and to the hostility Constantine V felt towards the Mother of God.

There is no doubt that the sources referring to the Iconoclastic period are biased and therefore must be read with caution and to be considered as revealing of Iconophile attitudes rather than as factual evidence. Hence, the alleged hostility of the Iconoclasts towards the Mother of God and the saints has not to be taken at face value since it may well not be representative of what the Iconoclasts really thought. The lack of Iconoclastic sources further complicates the whole question and does not allow us to draw any definitive conclusions. However, the study of the sources proves that the Iconophiles related the cult of icons directly to that of the Virgin and the saints. It seems that from a very early stage of the controversy, the cult of the Virgin was associated with the cult of icons and that in many instances devotion to the Theotokos was thought of as a synonym of piety and 'orthodoxy'. An example of this is the account of the reign of Leo IV by Theophanes in which the chronicler associates piety directly with devotion to

[354] John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum* I, Thurn (ed.), CFHB, vol. V, Berlin, 1973, 384.

Mary and tolerance towards monks.[355] Historiographical sources refer to the cult of Mary as a synonym, or rather a metonymy of the cult of images. This fact establishes that during Iconoclasm Mary was invested with a symbolic meaning that epitomised the cause of the Iconophiles.

Theophanes is generally thought of as a reliable source.[356] The content of the references to the Mother of God in his chronicle which have just been reviewed correspond to the accusations and refutations encountered in the proceedings of Nicaea II. Even if we accept that all the other sources depend on and repeat Theophanes' accounts of events and suggest that these events were merely a standard part of Iconophile argumentation, we may nonetheless consider them as illustrative of Iconodule altitudes. For the Iconophiles, hostility towards images was associated with hostility towards the Mother of God in whose womb matter was sanctified upon its assumption by the Word of God. For them, the Iconoclasts' rejection of images revealed a misunderstanding of the Incarnation and of its soteriological consequences. Within this framework, the means of the sanctification of matter, namely, the Virgin, and matter's worthiness to represent the divine were equated and formed part of the Iconophile refutation.

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[355] "For a short time he (Leo IV) appeared to be pious and *a friend of the holy Mother of God and of the monks...*" (my emphasis). Theophanes (Mango), 620 = (de Boor), I, 449, 14-15. Turner, "The Origins and Accession of Leo V," 172-203.

[356] See the introduction in Mango and Scott, *op. cit.*, xliv-lxiii and esp. lxii-lxiii where the editors draw attention to the weak points in Theophanes' account. On the historical circumstances surrounding the life of Theophanes the Confessor see S. Efthymiadis, "Le panégyrique de S. Théophane le Confesseur par S. Théodore Stoudite (BHG 1792b). Édition critique du texte intégral," *AB* 111, 1993, 259-290.

Hagiographical Sources

The study of the development of the Marian cult is no easy task. It involves a wide variety of sources including hagiographical works which touch upon the role of the Virgin in the outcome of the Iconoclastic controversy. Although not immediately relevant to the Marian lament, saints' *Lives* provide valuable information about the spread of the cult of the Virgin during the period in question. Most of the hagiographical sources that will be examined below date to the period following the restoration of icons in 843. However, their testimony reflects the developments that took place during the eighth and the first half of the ninth century and which were crystallized in the second half of the ninth century and thereafter.[357] In the tenth century the compiler of the *synaxarion* of Constantinople defines the scope of his endeavour as an effort "to offer a view of those things that are distant in time and space as if they were present" (transl. Cl. Rapp).[358] Among the reasons that Claudia Rapp gives in order to explain the compilations of saints' *Lives* and the metaphrastic activity of the tenth century I would like to draw particular attention to the effort made by writers of the tenth

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[357] For a list of the hagiographical sources of the Iconoclastic period see I. Sevcenko, "Hagiography of the Iconoclastic Period," in A. Bryer and J. Herrin (eds.), *Iconoclasm*, Birmingham, 1977, 113-131; P. Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism*, transl. by H. Lindsay and A. Moffatt, Byzantina Australiensia 3, Canberra, 1986, 109-111.

[358] H. Delehaye (ed.), *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae·Propylaeum ad Acta sanctorum Novembris*, Brussels, 1902, col. xiv. C. Rapp ("Byzantine Hagiographers as Antiquarians, Seventh to Tenth Centuries," *ByzFor* XXI, 1995, 31-44) focuses on statements about the relation between style and content in hagiographical works as well as assertions regarding the intended effect of these texts on the audience.

century "to preserve the memory of the saints and to promote their cult."[359] It is tempting to carry this statement one step further and to relate the literary hagiographical activity of the second half of the ninth and of the tenth centuries to the outcome of the Iconoclastic controversy.[360] From this perspective the literary activity of this period may be seen as an effect of the restoration of icons in that the cult of the saints and of the Mother of God associated with the cult of images during the Iconoclastic period subsequently came to the fore as symbols of Orthodoxy as defined in Nicaea II and banners of the Iconophiles. Although a stylistic analysis of the post-Iconoclastic hagiography would fall outside the scope of the present study it is important to draw attention to two developments: first, the importance the very act of writing hagiographical texts acquired during the period in question and second, the new style of hagiography (what Kazhdan calls

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[359] Rapp, "Byzantine Hagiographers," 31. With reference to the metaphrastic activity of the pre-Iconoclastic period see pp.35-36. The author convincingly argues that the view according to which the metaphrastic activity of the pre-Iconoclastic period aimed at 'downgrading' the original text whereas the post-Iconoclastic one aimed at the 'upgrading' of the text is nothing other than an over-simplification of the question. As the encomium of Symeon Metaphrastes by Psellus (E.A. Fisher, (ed.), *Michaelis Pselli Orationes Hagiographicae,* Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1994, 281-282, I.260-265) shows, the greatest virtue of the tenth century writer that Psellus acknowledged was his ability to make the text accessible to the people either by 'upgrading' or by 'downgrading' wherever that was necessary.

[360] P. van den Ven, "La patristique et l'hagiographie au Concile de Nicée de 787," *B* 25-27/ 1, 1955-1957, 352-362. Rapp ("Byzantine Hagiographers," 43-44) does not accept that the new impetus given to hagiography in the post-Iconoclastic period was an 'innovative' phenomenon and emphasizes instead the first metaphrastic activities of the seventh century.

'urban hagiography').[361] These two features of post-Iconoclastic hagiography can be explained by the predominant argumentation put forward in the preceding period. As Rapp points out, the importance of writing makes the hagiographer, "the essential medium through which the saints are conveyed to the audience," can be compared with the function of icons.[362] It is worth noting that the majority of the hagiographical texts of this period offers the audience a portrait of the saint and gives the audience the sense of a personal encounter with the person whose *Vita* is being narrated. As far as the 'urban' nature of hagiography is concerned, its main characteristic is that it does not depict the saint as a universal model of behaviour but as an accessible human figure.[363] The prominence given to the human rather than the 'divine' qualities of the saints reflect the importance attached to incarnational theology during the Iconoclastic period and can be compared with the manner in which Christ and the Mother of God were depicted

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[361] For the importance of the act of writing see I. Sevcenko, "Levels of Style in Byzantine Prose," *XVI Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Wien, 4.-9. Oktober 1981, Akten 1/1,* Vienna, 1981, 289-312; Rapp, "Byzantine Hagiographers," 42. For the new style of hagiography see *eadem, op.cit.,* 43 and A. Kazhdan and L.F. Sherry, "The Tale of a Happy Fool: the *Vita* of St. Philaretos the Merciful (BHG 1511z-1512b)," *B* LXVI, 1996, 351-362 and esp. 360-362.

[362] Rapp, "Byzantine Hagiographers," 42.

[363] Kazhdan and Sherry, "The Tale of a Happy Fool," 361-362 and Rapp, "Byzantine Hagiographers," 43-44. For the role of saints in the early Byzantine period see P. Brown, "The Rise and the Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *JRS* LXI, 1971, 80-101 and *idem,* "Town, Village and Holy Man: The Case of Syria," in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity,* London, 1982, 153-165.

in texts of the Iconoclastic period, which will be studied in detail in the next chapter.

The *Vitae* examined below represent but a part of Iconophile hagiography referring to saints of the eighth and ninth centuries. My choice was determined by the availability of texts and the limitation of space. In the hagiographies sources the Mother of God appears to be playing a crucial role in the life of the saint. In the *Vitae* examined below the Virgin emerges as protectress of the saint or guide or model according to the occasion. Her role testifies to the importance that Mary acquired during the Iconoclastic period and emphasizes her closeness to mankind whom she guides and for whom she intercedes with God. The association of the Virgin with monasticism is also worth noting in that in all the *Vitae* examined Mary is either the protectress of a monk or the patron of a monastery. This affinity could well point to the role of the Virgin as a symbol of the Iconophile camp whose most devout adherents were monks.

The Vita of Stephen the Younger

One of the earliest *Vitae* of the Iconoclastic period is the one of the martyr Stephen, the famous recluse of Mount Auxentius in Bithynia, written by Stephen the Deacon.[364] The author composed his work in Constantinople forty-two years after the death of the saint.[365] Consequently, the *Vita* must have been written

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[364] Theophanes (Mango), 603 = (de Boor), I 436.

[365] M.-F. Auzépy (ed.), *La Vie d'Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre,* Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 3, Hampshire, 1997, 89 line 19. (Henceforth abbreviated as *Life of Stephen the Younger.*)

sometime between 808 and 810, that is at a time that was critical for the Iconoclastic controversy.[366] Father Epiphanius, mentioned in the *Vita* as the person who ordered the text to be written, in fact was only transmitting the wishes of the women of the monastery of Trichinareai.[367] Stephen the Younger was born in 715 and died either in 767 if we follow the dating of the *Vita* or in 765 if we follow the dating of the chroniclers.[368] In either case it is certain that Stephen was martyred during the reign of Constantine V and that history remembers him as *par excellence* the martyr-defender of icons.

Although Stephen was a monk of the famous monastic centre of Mount Auxentius he owes his celebrity to the tragic death he suffered when lynched by the crowd in the streets of Constantinople during the crisis of 765-767.[369] Stephen's martyrdom has been used by modern scholars as the most striking

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[366] For the dating of the text see the detailed analysis by Auzépy (*op.cit.*, 5-6 and *n.* 5 on p.180). The editor convincingly rejects the case made out by Speck (*op.cit.*, 228 ff.) according to which the *Vita* was written partly forty-two years after the death of the saint and partly after the end of the Iconoclastic controversy, in 843. For Stephen the Deacon, see S. Efthymiadis, "The Life of St. Stephen the Younger (BHG 1666). An Additional Debt," *Hellenika* 43, 1993, 206-209. Efthymiadis (*op.cit.*, 206) suggests that Stephen the Deacon took part in the Council of Nicaea II; Auzépy (*op.cit.*, 7) considers his suggestion probable but difficult to prove.

[367] Auzépy (ed.), *Life of Stephen the Younger*, 18-19.

[368] *Ibid*, 8-9 with *notes*.

[369] The martyrdom of Stephen the Younger is recorded in numerous contemporary sources, such as the *Chronicle* of Theophanes, the *Breviarium* of Nicephorus, the *Vita* of Cosmas of Maiouma, and the *Apocalypse* of Leo of Constantinople which, however, are independent from one another. For references and discussion, see Auzépy (ed.), *Life of Stephen the Younger*, 21 and for the crisis of 766, see 29-34.

example of the persecution of the monks by Constantine V.[370] In this study, however, Stephen's *Vita* is examined with reference to the Mother of God and the role that she appears to have played in the formation of this archetypical martyr of the Iconophile side.

The Virgin comes into the story of the saint's life at the very beginning following the introduction and a brief note on his parents and his homeland.[371] Stephen was born of a mother who despite having given birth to two daughters, considered herself sterile because she had not had a son.[372] The conception of the saint is described in a way that is reminiscent of the conception of the Virgin by St Anne with whom the mother of the saint -also called Anne- clearly identified herself.[373] According to the *Vita,* Stephen's mother was a daily visitor to sanctuaries of the Virgin, especially the church of Blachernai.[374] The text comprises the first specific mention of the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria and the ritual associated with it.[375] The description of Anne praying and shedding tears as

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[370] See, for instance, Brown, "A Dark Age Crisis," 295-296 and *n.* 216. Cf. Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Constantine V,* 140.

[371] Auzépy (ed.), *Life of Stephen the Younger,* 87-91 (the numbers refer to the pages of the Greek text).

[372] *Ibid,* 91.

[373] *Ibid,* 92, lines 3-7.

[374] *Ibid,* 92, lines 8-10.

[375] The ritual performed every Friday is mentioned in Theophanes (Mango), 387 and *n.* 18 on p.388 = (de Boor), I 265-266, "In the same year the emperor Maurice introduced a litany at Blachernai in memory of the holy Mother of God, at which laudations of our Lady were to be delivered. He called it a *panegyris.*" See also Averil Cameron, "The Virgin's Robe," 47-48 and chapter V below.

she turned her face towards the icon of the Virgin with the Child clearly reveals the emphasis placed on the cult of images and relates the veneration of images to the veneration of the Mother of God.[376]

The supplication to the Virgin comprises numerous poetic and emotionally loaded images that will be encountered also in the homilies and hymns in honour of the Mother of God which will be studied in the next chapter. The Virgin is described as the common salvation and protection of mankind, the refuge of those who seek her help, the anchor and patron of those who look for her in their distress, the salvatory port for those who are drowned in the ocean of life because of their anxieties, the sure protection of those who call on her to help them in their despair, the glory of mothers and daughters, the one who -making God incarnate and bringing him into the world- reversed the curse of the first Eve who shamed the female sex.[377] The prayers of Anne were answered by the Virgin who appeared to her in a vision while the future mother of Stephen was asleep and assured her that she would conceive a son.[378] The name of the saint was prophesied by Germanos I of Constantinople when he gave his blessing to the pregnant mother in the name of the Lord, his mother and the protomartyr Stephen.[379] After the birth of Stephen, his mother, filled with gratitude, went to

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[376] Auzépy (ed.), *Life of Stephen the Younger,* 92 lines 11-12. Stephen the Deacon describes the child that the Virgin holds in her arms in the icon with the words "her son and God", a phrase that echoes the *kontakion* of Romanos and the lamenting Virgin. For the iconography of the icon see Auzépy, *op.cit., n.* 19 on p.183.

[377] *Ibid,* 92 lines 15-24.

[378] *Ibid,* 92-93, lines 25-26 and 1-7.

[379] *Ibid,* 94 lines 11-13.

the church of the Blachernai to give thanks to the Theotokos: standing in front of the same icon, with her eyes full of tears, albeit this time tears of joy and recognition, Anne hailed the Virgin for granting her a son.[380] Following that, Anne placed the child in front of the icon and offered him to the Virgin asking her to accept the offspring of her own mediation.[381] Commenting on the dedication of the child to the Mother of God, Stephen the Deacon states that "indeed, the courageous mother in her thanksgiving prophesied that her son was to be martyred in defense of the icon of Christ and his mother...".[382] It seems that the icon of Christ and his mother mentioned in the *Vita* represents icons in general, but it has to be noted that the choice of that particular icon, as well as its association with the miraculous birth of the saint, emphasizes the role ascribed to the Mother of God by the Iconophile author and presumably by his audience as well. We are led to this conclusion also by the incident recorded in the ninth chapter of the *Vita* in which the Patriarch Germanos repudiates the Iconoclastic beliefs of the emperor Leo III in the following words: "Emperor, since Christ the Lord, our God the Saviour, was made incarnate through the immaculate blood of the holy Theotokos and we saw him as a perfect and circumscribed man, all idolatrous veneration ceased and every idolatrous statue was given to the fire and the darkness."[383] Furthermore, Germanos deriving authority from tradition, cites

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[380] *Ibid,* 95 lines 2-10.

[381] *Ibid,* 95 lines 12-15.

[382] *Ibid,* 95 lines 23-26.

[383] *Ibid,* 99 lines 6-11. In the text the incident is dated to the year 736; however, this date has to be corrected to the year 726 or 730 at the latest, i.e. before the deposition of

the icon of Christ known as the *acheiropoietos* icon of Edessa and the icon of the Virgin supposedly painted by the evangelist Luke from life.[384]

Constantine V is referred to in the *Vita* of Stephen the Younger in terms similar to those in which he is described in the historiographical sources. Stephen the Deacon asserts that the tyrant has turned the venerable church of Blachernai, once decorated with frescoes depicting events from the earthly life of Christ, into a crop-watcher's hut and an observatory for birds for he filled the church with depictions of all sorts of trees and birds.[385] In his account of the Iconoclastic council of Hiereia Stephen refers specifically to the rejection of the mediation of the saints and the all-holy Theotokos after their death, an assertion that is to be found also in the historiographical sources.[386]

After spending several years as a recluse in Mount Auxentius Stephen the Younger was sent into exile by the Iconoclast emperor Constantine V. While in exile, in Proconese, the saint is reported to have miraculously healed a soldier - 'bent in two' according to the *Vita*- by praying to and urging him to venerate two icons, one of Christ and the other of the Mother of God.[387]

Germanos I from the patriarchal throne of Constantinople (Theophanes (Mango), 564-565 = (de Boor), I 408). See Auzépy, *op. cit., n.*60 on p.191.

[384] *Ibid,* 99 lines 16-22 and *notes* 62 and 63 on p.192. See also Averil Cameron, "The History of the Image of Edessa: The Telling of a Story," *Okeanos: Essays Presented to Ihor Sevcenko*, C. Mango (ed.), Harvard, 1983, 80-94.

[385] Auzépy (ed.), *Life of Stephen the Younger,* 126-127 lines 24-26 and 1-6.

[386] *Ibid,* 127 lines 24-26. See also Parry, *Depicting the Word,* 193-194. Cf. however the *Horos* of the council regarding the mediation of the Virgin in Mansi XIII, 345A-B.

[387] Auzépy (ed.), *Life of Stephen the Younger,* 154 lines 1-4.

The icon of the Virgin is also mentioned in connexion with the saint's encounter with the emperor. Stephen is reported to have refuted the views of Constantine V arguing that the use of church vessels in the liturgy was held to be legitimate because they were sanctified through their use. He rebuked the emperor for , equating the image of Christ with that of Apollo and the icon of the Virgin with that of Artemis.[388] While imprisoned the saint is said to have received food from a woman only after he was persuaded that she was an Iconophile.[389]

In the *Vita* the Mother of God is linked with the two most signal incidents in the life of the saint: first, Stephen's miraculous birth occurred through the intercession of the Theotokos and second, his martyrdom which gave proof of his dedication to the Virgin. The motif of sterility overcome by the Virgin is encountered in numerous hagiographical texts and may well be considered as a *topos* of the genre, although that does not make its use meaningless. The presence of the Mother of God either through her miraculous intervention or through her icons, with the help of which Stephen performs miracles, permeates the life of the saint. Special emphasis is placed on her role as the intercessor on behalf of mankind as well as on her close relationship with Christ and the cult of images. As we shall see below this *Vita* is not unique in this respect.

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[388] *Ibid,* 156 lines 7-12.

[389] The woman gave the saint three icons -one of the Virgin and another two of the Apostles Peter and Paul- that she had kept locked away in a drawer. Auzépy (ed.), *Life of Stephen the Younger,* 159 lines 1-31.

The Vita of the Empress Irene

Irene was a native of Athens who in 768 was brought to Constantinople by Constantine V who crowned her and married her to his son, Leo IV. Irene was a devoted Iconophile and in his chronicle Cedrenus relates that when her husband Leo IV discovered that the Augusta had concealed two icons, he refused thereafter to sleep with her.[390] Following Leo's death in 780, Irene is said to have been miraculously cured of a haemorrhage by the waters of the Virgin *tes Peges.* In return for the miracle Irene lavished presents on the church, including mosaics.[391] The *Vita* of Irene survives in a manuscript dating to the twelfth century and largely follows the account by Theophanes.[392] According to Treadgold who studied the manuscript "only the three last pages can be considered as an independent historical source."[393] However, these three pages are especially interesting for the present study since they describe the life of the empress after she was exiled to the island of Prinkipo and subsequently to the island of Lesbos where she died. The hagiographer models the description of the death of the empress on the pattern of homilies on the Dormition of the Virgin.[394]

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[390] Cedrenus, 2.19.17-20.3.

[391] W. Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival 780-842,* Stanford, California, 1988, 63, 75-96 and 110-126.

[392] The manuscript in which the Life is preserved is the Vaticanus graecus 2014. See W. Treadgold, "The Unpublished Saint's Life of the Empress Irene (BHG 2205)," *ByzFor* VIII, 1982, 237-251 and esp. 238.

[393] *Ibid,* 238.

[394] See below the discussion of the three homilies by John of Damascus *On the Dormition.* See also, A. Kazhdan, "Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries," *DOP* 44, 1990, 131-143.

The empress, canonised for her role in the restoration of icons in 787, was sent into exile by Nicephoros I who seized the throne in 802. Irene built a church dedicated to the Theotokos on the island of Prinkipo; on her deathbed she asked to be buried in the chapel of St Nicholas situated to the north of the nave of the church of the Virgin.[395] The *Vita,* which according to Treadgold was written after 843, states that Irene built not only a church dedicated to the Virgin but also a convent, to the higoumene of which the empress entrusted "the welfare of her flock."[396] The fact that the empress is described as having a flock points to the intention of the hagiographer to present her as a worthy 'emperor' who leads his flock in the manner of a spiritual guide "to a spring of repose, and to a shady lawn."[397] Irene died in 803 in the island of Lesbos with her people gathered around her.[398] Her body was taken to Prinkipo where she was buried as she wished in the church of the Virgin. At this point it is interesting to note that the hagiographer describes the devotion of her 'flock': "Gathering there, that holy flock invokes the delight of her holy memory every year in hymns, and has acquired her as *intercessor, guardian, sure support, and strength.* Thus she, supporting and upholding her own flock, keeps it safe from every insult of the Devil. *Protected by her as by a wall,* she drives off every attacking vanguard of

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[395] Vat. gr. 2014, f. 136r; Treadgold, *op.cit.,* 245.

[396] Vat. gr. 2014, f. 135r; Treadgold, *op.cit.,* 244, *Δέξαι τῆς ἐμῆς βακτηρίας το ποίμνιον·...*

[397] Vat. gr. 2014, f. 135r; Treadgold, *op.cit.,* 244, *Ἐκθρεψον ταῦτα καὶ ὁδήγησον ἐπι πηγην ἀναπαύσεως, καὶ ἐπι τόπον χλόης κατάσκιον...*

[398] Vat. gr. 2014, f. 135r; Treadgold, *op.cit.,* 244.

the demons"[399], (transl. Treadgold, my italics). Commenting on this passage, Treadgold misses the striking similarity of the description of Irene with that of the Theotokos in terms of her function in the service of the faithful and as protectress against demons.[400]

As remarked above, the setting and description of her death recall homilies on the Dormition of the Virgin dating from the eighth century. The yearly celebration of the empress in hymns probably echoes the celebration of the feasts of the Virgin since there is no indication of any hymn specially written in honour of Irene and, as Treadgold himself notes, even the reference in the *Synaxarion* is a very brief one.[401] The theme of protectress of the city is clearly reminiscent of the Virgin as symbol and protectress of Constantinople and the same is true about her powers of protection against evil and especially demons.[402] Hence, we may conclude that the *Vita* intentionally associates the empress with the Virgin for two more or less obvious reasons. First, Irene's association with the Virgin invested the empress with authority, status and a measure of the sanctity that people wanted to ascribe to her in view of her role in the restoration of icons but failed to because of her atrocious blinding of Constantine VI. Second and more significant for the present study, in restoring icons the empress was seen as

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[399] Vat. gr. 2014, f. 136r; Treadgold, *op.cit.*, text on 245, translation on 247.

[400] Cf. Theodore Stoudite, *Oratio in Dormitionem Deiparae*, col. 721C.

[401] Treadgold, *op.cit.*, 237; Ch. Angelides, "De Aelia Pulcheria Augusta Eiusque Fortuna," *Diptycha* 5, 1991-1992, 251-269 and esp. 263 ff. and now *eadem, Pulcheria. La Castità al Potere, (c. 399-c.455),* Milano, 1998, 87 ff.

[402] For the Virgin protectress (a topic studied in detail by Averil Cameron) see chapter II; for all other themes see below and chapter IV.

a protectress of the Virgin, who was her own patron and to whom she dedicated the convent in Prinkipo.

The Vita of Peter of Atroa

The Mother of God appears in the *Vita* of Peter of Atroa (773-837), one of the most important hagiographical sources of the Iconoclastic period.[403] The *Vita* of the saint was written by the monk Sabas in the second half of the ninth century.[404] According to the *Vita,* Peter was born in Elaia in Asia and of parents formerly barren.[405] Before his birth, his mother, Anna, had already offered the child to the church of the Virgin.[406] It was there that Peter was baptised when he was only forty days old.[407] He was given the name Theophylaktos and at the age of twelve was tonsured as a monk in the same church.[408] The *Vita* relates the first

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[403] Sevcenko, "Hagiography of the Iconoclastic Period," 113-131.

[404] The monk Sabas must have been of Constantinopolitan origin. He was also the author of the *Vita* of Ioannikios; the *Vita* of Makarios of Pelekete that was attributed to the author is probably a spurious work. See V. Laurent (ed.), *La Vie merveilleuse de Saint Pierre d'Atroa,* SubsHag 29, Brussels, 1956, 10-13. Laurent reckons that the *Vita* of Peter must have been written around 847. For the date of the text and the place where it was written see Laurent, *op.cit.*, 15. For the attribution of the *Vita* of Makarios see Laurent, *op.cit.*, 16-17 and *supra* the discussion of the *Vita* of Stephen the Younger.

[405] *Vie de Saint Pierre d'Atroa,* 2, 6-7.

[406] The hagiographer makes an obvious parallel between the sterile Anna, mother of the Virgin, and Anna, mother of the saint. The parallel is taken further with the dedication of the first-born child to the church of the Virgin where he is received by the bishop. See *Vie de Saint Pierre d'Atroa,* 2, 8-12.

[407] *Ibid,* 2, 25-28.

[408] *Ibid,* 3, 1-4.

miracle of the saint[409] which is followed by the miraculous apparition of the Virgin to him in a dream.[410] Peter receives from the Mother of God the order to follow the monk Jacob, who led the young monk to one of the most important monastic centres of the Iconoclastic period, Mount Olympus.[411] In a second vision the Mother of God appears to Peter again in a dream this time directing him to Mount Dagouta in Phrygia where a hermit named Paul was living.[412] The latter, informed by the Virgin of his arrival, offers him a place to stay and accepts him as a disciple, giving him the name of Peter as the Mother of God had ordered him to do.[413]

The Virgin, whose miraculous birth and presentation in the temple is reflected in the account of the early life of the saint, appears in the text as the recipient of honour since the saint was dedicated to her and baptised in her

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[409] *Ibid*, 3, 8-30.

[410] The saint remained seven days without eating or sleeping, praying to the Mother of God to show him the way to salvation. The Mother of God responded to his prayer and appeared to him in a dream. See *Vie de Saint Pierre d'Atroa*, 4, 1-10.

[411] *Ibid*, 4, 10-13.

[412] In the text the Mother of God is described as showing the saint the way to Phrygia in a very vivid manner. *Vie de Saint Pierre d'Atroa*, 4, 20-25, "....the undefiled Theotokos appeared in his sleep saying to him: follow me. The saint started walking behind her; and as she reached the Phrygian mountains, in the area called Dragoutis, she showed him a place called Crypta [the hidden]."

[413] *Ibid*, 4, 25-40. Peter is said to have found the saint waiting for him at the door. On Peter's appearance the hermit Paul greeted him with the following words: "Welcome, my most-sweet child. The Theotokos has told me all about you and that you would come to me today..." On hearing his words Peter replied: "Father, it was the same Theotokos who lead me to your holiness."

church. The apocryphal account, according to which Mary spent the twelve first years of her life in the temple sanctuary, is echoed in the hagiography which asserts that the saint stayed in the church for twelve years,[414] during which he made such progress every day in age and in wisdom that everyone admired his judgement, prayerfulness, asceticism and piety.[415] Visions of the Virgin answer the exertions of the saint. It may be noted that Mary does not appear to Peter in the role of intercessor in the same manner as she does in the following chapter on the hymnography and homiletics of the eighth century. On the contrary, she judges the eagerness of the supplicant and consents to his petition. Her portrayal in the *Vita* of Peter of Atroa is not characterised by the tender human qualities that are encountered in other texts of the period. Although invested with the authority of her divine status she is the one to whom the saint addresses his prayer as to a heavenly mother and also the one who responds to it.

The Vita of Irene, Abbess of Chrysobalanton

Irene was a native of Cappadocia who travelled to Constantinople in 855 in order to take part in the bride-show organised by the empress Theodora for her son Michael III. Irene lived between approximately 830 and 930 when she died at the age of 97. Her *Vita* was written about 980.[416] The text gives an insight into the

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[414] *Ibid*, 3, 7-8.

[415] *Ibid*, 3, 4-7.

[416] J.O. Rosenqvist (ed.), *The Life of St Irene Abbess of Chrysobalanton*, Acta Universitatis Uppsaliensis 1, Uppsala, 1986, xxviii. (Henceforth abbreviated as Rosenqvist, *Life of St Irene.*)

way monastic foundations worked after the Triumph of Orthodoxy. However, for the purpose of the present study we shall concentrate on the references made in the text to the Virgin Mary.

On her way to Constantinople to take part in the bride-show the pious Irene visited the hermit Ioannikios on Mount Olympus. Not knowing her name, the saint welcomed her as the future abbess of the convent of Chrysobalanton in Constantinople. Irene became a nun after discovering that by the time she reached Constantinople the emperor's marriage with another woman -Eudocia Dekapolitissa- had already been arranged.[417] The saint recalled the welcome extended to her by Ioannikios and joined the monastic community of Chrysobalanton where she took vows. The *Vita* emphasizes Irene's self-discipline and ascetic exercises, thanks to which she was granted by God power over demons and entrusted with the spiritual guidance of other people. As we shall see, these qualities endowed the saint with the semblance of the Mother of God.[418] On one occasion, by which time Irene was already abbess of Chrysobalanton, one of her nuns, a young woman of Cappadocian origin, fell victim to the magic of a crafty sorcerer in league with a man who was in love with the girl and wished to persuade her to return to Cappadocia.[419] After three days of fervent prayer Irene had a vision of St Basil who counselled her to take the nun to the church of Blachernai where she might be healed by the Virgin. The abbess followed the

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[417] Rosenqvist, *Life of St Irene,* 12 lines 8-10. (Numbers refer to pages in the Rosenqvist edition and are followed by line numbers where necessary.)

[418] See, for example, the miracle of the Virgin healing the thief possessed by a demon in the *Vita* of St Andrew the Fool in L. Rydén (ed.), *The Life of St Andrew the Fool,* 2 vols., Uppsala, 1995, 108-112 lines 1460-1497.

[419] Rosenqvist, *Life of St Irene,* 52, 54.

advice of St Basil; while in the church Irene had another vision.[420] In her second vision the abbess saw "an awe-inspiring populous procession being prepared."[421] Someone asked her who she was, who did not know that the Mother of God was present and had been pleased to proceed from the church of the Blachernai to the chapel of the Holy *Soros* in order to heal those who anticipated her miraculous intervention.[422] St Basil appears also in the vision and tells the Theotokos the reason why Irene has left her convent and come to the church. The persons involved in the healing miracle are not only the abbess of Chrysobalanton but also St Basil and the two saints Anastasia.[423] With the intervention of Sts Basil and Anastasia the nun is finally healed; however, the miracle is clearly ascribed to the Virgin since it had the form of a miracle worked during a period of incubation and took place in a church and through a vision of the Virgin who mediated for the salvation of the Cappadocian nun.[424]

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[420] *Ibid,* 56 lines 3-26.

[421] *Ibid,* 56 lines 30-32.

[422] *Ibid,* 58 lines 4-7. Cf. the vision of the Virgin during a nocturnal doxology at the church of Blachernai recorded in the *Life* of St Andrew the Fool (*op.cit.*, 254, lines 3732-3758). On this occasion Andrew takes the opportunity to show Epiphanius how the Theotokos spreads her veil over the congregation. See also L.Rydén, "The Vision of the Virgin at Blachernai and the Feast of Pokrov," *AB* 94, 1976, 63-82 and esp. 67-72 and N. K. Moran, *Singers in Late Byzantine and Slavonic Painting,* Leiden, 1986, 126-127.

[423] Rosenqvist, *Life of St Irene,*58 lines 16-32. On the two Anastasias, see P. Devos, "Sainte Anastasie la Vierge et la source de sa passion, BHG3 76z," *AB* 80, 1962, 33-51 and esp. 33-35 also cited in Rosenqvist, *op.cit., n.* 10 on p.59.

[424] For incubation cults see V. Hunnink, "Apuleius and the 'Asclepius'," *VigChr* 50, 1996, 288-308; C.L. Connor, *Art and Miracles in Medieval Byzantium: The Crypt at Hosios Loukas and its Frescoes,* Princeton, 1991 and for different aspects of the cult of

Two other instances interesting to the present study are encountered at the point where the abbess of Chrysobalanton weeps as she contemplates the Incarnation of the Word: her tears are so many that they flood the floor of the church and the abbess in order to avoid the attention of the nuns has to open a hole in the floor in order to hide them.[425] The contemplation of the Incarnation is indirectly linked to the Mother of God since Mary's prominence during the Iconoclastic controversy was due precisely to her role as the means through which the Word became incarnate. Of the whole mystery of the Incarnation it is the sacrifice of the Word that moves the abbess most and that represents the climax of Christ's earthly life: "Considering how the Invisible, the Impalpable, the Incomprehensible or Inconceivable One not only condescended to put on mortal and corruptible flesh for our salvation, but also to be sacrificed, and how He, being dead, proceeds, setting forth to us as food and drink the immaculate body..."[426] In the passage just cited, attention is drawn to the palpability of Christ's body, partaken in the liturgy. The death of Christ is referred to explicitly and within the framework of the salvatory mystery of the divine economy. Thus, the Incarnation and the Death of Christ are promoted as the means through which man is not merely saved but also deified: "...in order that the compound of which we are composed be mixed with the intangible through the tangible, with the impalpable through the palpable, with the invisible through the visible, and like

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St Luke see the illuminating collection of articles in C.L. Connor - W.R. Connor (eds.), *The Life and Miracles of St Luke of Steiris,* Brookline Mass., 1994.

[425] Rosenqvist, *Life of St Irene,* 64, 66 lines 10-29 and 1-11.

[426] Transl. by Rosenqvist, *op.cit.,* 65.

fire be transformed into the nature and glory and splendour of Divinity through the union with Him, and live the eternal, the undefiled life..."[427] The Incarnation is presented as the mystical union of God and man while emphasis is laid on the flesh, that is, matter, and its sanctification through the sacrifice of the Word. A point that seems to me of extreme importance is the manner in which the palpable and the tangible become a means for man to attain divinity. The palpable flesh of Christ makes his divinity accessible to man in much the same manner in which icons make divinity accessible to the human.

One other reference of the *Vita* should not pass unnoticed: it is the similarity of the description of the Virgin in the incubation miracle mentioned above to the description of Irene in a portrait drawn by a painter. In the vision of the abbess the Virgin "went about...*yet her face was invisible because of the unbearable effusion of light.*"[428] (transl. Rosenqvist, my italics). In another incident recorded further on in the *Vita* Irene mediated between the emperor and a kinsman of hers that was in prison. It is stated that the abbess appeared to the emperor in a vision and asked him to release the unjustly accused man.[429] The emperor sent a delegation to Irene, among them a painter whom he commissioned to make a portrait of Irene and bring it back to him so that he might identify with certainty the person he had seen in his vision. When the delegation arrived at the convent, "the saint came in to them through the side-door. Taking the lead in prostration, she made the men too prostrate themselves, and when they raised

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[427] *Ibid,* 65.

[428] *Ibid,* 59.

[429] *Ibid,* 92.

their eyes, they saw a *flash of lightning suddenly rise from her precious face. Unable to bear it, they went backward and fell to the ground...for it flooded the whole church with its brightness*"[430] (transl. Rosenqvist, my italics). After the meeting with the abbess the delegation returned to the palace. When they showed the emperor her image "and just as the emperor cast his eyes on it, *a flash of lightning suddenly sprang up from it, gleaming terribly before his eyes...*"[431] (transl. Rosenqvist, my italics). The portraits of the Virgin and of the abbess possess obvious similarities in that the countenance of each is almost obscured by the light that issues from it. But even more important is the relation between the person and its image both in the case of the Virgin and in that of the abbess. The apparition of the Virgin takes place during the visit of Irene to the church of Blachernai where a cult of the image of the Virgin has been established.[432] In the case of the abbess we see that her countenance provokes exactly the same response in both instances: first when the delegation meets her in the monastery and again, when the emperor sees her portrait. The relation of these incidents may be taken as indicative of the cult of icons and of the prevailing concept that the icon possesses the characteristics of the person it depicts. The glittering light that plays upon the countenances of both the Virgin and the abbess evinces the holiness of Irene, modelled on that of the Virgin.

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[430] *Ibid,* 94, 96 and translation in 95, 97.

[431] *Ibid,* 96 lines 22-26 and translation in 97.

[432] For the cult of the Virgin at Blachernai see the discussion in chapter V.

The Vita of Peter the Athonite

Before Lake's publication, the only source of biographical detail concerning Peter the Athonite was the eulogy written in the fourteenth century by the propounder of Hesychasm, Gregory Palamas.[433] Lake's researches in the libraries of Mount Athos at the beginning of the twentieth century brought to light another *Vita,* written by a certain Nikolaos in the second half of the tenth century at the latest.[434] Subsequently, Papachryssanthou discovered that the *Life* of Peter is preserved in at least thirty manuscripts, nine of which date from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries.[435] The *Vita* of the saint contains facts about the ninth

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[433] This *Vita* is published in the *Acta Sanctorum* for June 12, as well as in PG 150, cols. 996A-1040C. Gregory Palamas reproduces a large part of the earlier *Vita* by Nikolaos.

[434] K. Lake, *The Early Days of Monasticism on Mount Athos,* Oxford, 1909. For an incomplete list of the manuscripts in which the text of the early *Vita* is preserved see Lake, *op.cit.,* 9-10. A critical edition of the *Vita* has not yet been written. The text by Lake was reprinted in *Ἁγιορειτικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* 5, 1940-1941, 35-50. All references in this text are to page numbers in the work by Lake. D. Papachryssanthou (*Ὁ Ἀθωνικὸς Μοναχισμός,*
Ἀρχές καί Ὀργάνωση, Athens, 1992, 85-87, henceforth abbreviated as Papachryssanthou, *Athonite Monasticism,* and *eadem,* "La *Vie* ancienne de Saint Pierre l'Athonite. Date, composition et valeur historique," *AB* 92, 1974, 19-61 and esp. 19) refers to other hagiographical sources concerning Peter the Athonite: a canon written in honour of the saint by Joseph the Hymnographer in the ninth century (some time between 831 and 841 when the famous hymnographer was in Thessaloniki) which does not provide any historical information apart from testifying that Peter lived in the first half of the ninth century, and numerous offices in honour of the saint that are preserved in Athonite manuscripts.

[435] Papachryssanthou, "La *Vie* ancienne de Saint Pierre l'Athonite," 20 and *n.* 2.

century in which the saint was alive and about the early history of monasticism on Mount Athos.[436]

Peter the Athonite was a young soldier when he was captured by the Arabs against whom he had been sent to fight.[437] While in captivity Peter's patron was St Nicholas, to whom Peter promised that if released he would go to Rome to take the monastic vows he had long ago promised God he would take.[438] On his way back from Rome following his release and while still at sea Peter had a vision in his sleep of the Mother of God and St Nicholas. St Nicholas appeared to him begging the Mother of God to disclose to Peter the place where he would spend the rest of his years.[439] In his address to the Theotokos St Nicholas lets it be known that it was she who had delivered Peter from captivity.[440] The Virgin reveals to Peter that he will live on the Holy Mountain and prophesies the future of Athos and its monks, saying that it was the place that granted her when she begged it of her son and God for those who would flee the turmoil of the world and pursue the spiritual way with all the strength they possessed, calling upon her

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[436] G. Anrich (*Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche,* 2 vols., Leipzig, Berlin, 1913 and 1917 respectively, vol. I, 153-182 and vol. 2, 85-87) identified Peter the Athonite with Peter Scholarios who is referred to in the encomium of St Nicholas. Cf. St. Binon, "La *Vie* de S. Pierre l'Athonite, *Atti del V Congresso internationale di studi bizantini,* Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici, vol. V, Rome, 1936, 43-52, esp. 48 ff., and Papachryssanthou, "La *Vie* ancienne," 25ff.

[437] According to the *Vita* Peter was a *scholarios* of the fifth *schole* for which see *The Life of Peter the Athonite*, 18.

[438] *Ibid,* 19-20.

[439] *Ibid,* 25 ff.

[440] *Ibid,* 25.

in truth and faith and willingness of soul that they might spend their earthly life without concerns and inherit the life of the world to come. "My spirit rejoices in that" [that is, the Holy Mountain], the Virgin says, and adds that the monks of Athos will become so numerous that they will fill the place from one end to the other and, if they endure, they shall enjoy the mercy of Christ through eternity. Finally, the Virgin prophesies that she will multiply the monks from the northern most to the most southern limits of the mountain and they shall dominate the mountain from sea to sea and that she will make their name renowned throughout the world and will defend them from every danger.[441]

There is another reference to the Virgin where the hagiographer describes the struggle of the saint against demons. In his struggle with the demon screaming outside his cave the saint, in his despair lest he does not survive the combat, pleads with the Theotokos to help him.[442] As soon as the devil hears the name of the Mother of God he disappears. The same happens on a second occasion when

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[441] *Ibid,* 25. Because of its importance to Athonite monasticism this part of the *Vita* was copied extensively and reproduced in numerous manuscripts among them the *Patria* of Mount Athos, the surviving manuscripts of which date to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries, nonetheless they probably reproduce oral Athonite legends. For two different versions of the *Patria* see Sp. Lambros, "Τὰ Πάτρια τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους," *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 9, 1912, 123-126 and 135-137. See also M. Gedeon, *Ὁ Ἄθως. Ἀναμνήσεις, Ἔγγραφα, Σημειώσεις,* Constantinople 1885, 297-300 and 308-309. In both versions the Virgin is said to have visited Mount Athos during her lifetime. The dedication and blessing of and the prophecy about the future of Athos are reminiscent of the one recorded in the *Life* of Peter. For discussion see Papachryssanthou, "La *Vie* ancienne," 40-41.

[442] *The Life of Peter the Athonite,* 27.

Satan sends the beasts of the forest to attack the hermit.[443] The other two times that the devil attacked Peter he did so in disguise: the first as a servant from his home who managed to discover the place where the hermit was living.[444] The saint answers his entreaties to return to his homeland that he would do so only if Christ and the Theotokos who led him to this place would give him a sign that he should go. Again, as soon as he heard the name of the Theotokos, the devil fled.[445] The last time that the demon assaulted the saint he disguised himself as an archangel of God and tried to tempt Peter but mention of the Theotokos' name once again repulsed him.[446]

When Peter died his body was translated to the church of Clementos.[447] It was here that the saint's remains began to work miracles; while later on certain monks removed his remains to the narthex of the church of the Mother of God.[448] According to the hagiographer, it was in this church that the monks held their annual assembly.[449] Papachryssanthou convincingly argues that the church in question must have been in Karyes, the capital of Mount Athos from a very early period.[450] But which was this church? In all probability it was the church of the

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[443] *Ibid,* 28 and Papachryssanthou, "La *Vie* ancienne," 42 and *n.* 3.

[444] *Ibid,* 29-30.

[445] *Ibid,* 29.

[446] *Ibid,* 30 and Papachryssanthou, "La *Vie* ancienne," 42 *n.* 7.

[447] *The Life of Peter the Athonite,* 34.

[448] *Ibid,* 34.

[449] *Ibid,* 34, ...ἔνθα εἰώθεισαν τας ἐτησίους συνάξεις ἐπιτελεῖν...

[450] Papachryssanthou, "La *Vie* ancienne," 36 and *n.* 6. Note that the capital of the Athonite peninsula was initially called *Mesi* and it was not until later that it was given

Protaton, dedicated to the Mother of God. In his study of the development of the Protaton, Mylonas argues that the church is undeniably the oldest monument surviving in Karyes.[451] It took its name from the *protos* i.e. the person in charge of the community of monks who were living on the Holy Mountain. The first mention of a *protos* -he was named Andrew- is encountered at the beginning of the tenth century (in 908);[452] this implies that by then there already existed on Mount Athos a monastic community with a central organization established in Karyes.[453] The first *Vita* of St Athanasius, written in the middle of the tenth century, mentions that in his day the number of monks had increased so greatly that for their meetings in the church of the Protaton the *gerontes* [the elders] were very short of space.[454]

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the name Karyes. For the church of Protaton see also *eadem, Athonite Monasticism, n.* 74 on p.196

[451] P. Mylonas, "Les étapes successives de construction du Protaton au Mont Athos," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 28, 1979, 143-160 and esp. 143.

[452] Papachryssanthou, *Athonite Monasticism,* 152.

[453] *Ibid,* 308-309.

[454] J. Noret (ed.), *Vitae duae antiquae Sancti Athanasii Athonitae,* Louvain, 1982, 28. In a recent article the late archaeologist S. Kissas ("Dve Domentijanove beleske o Protatonu," *Hilandarski Zbornik* 6, 1986, 47-56 with summary in French on pp. 57-58) argues that the founder of the Protaton church must have been Michael III and the probable date of its foundation the year 855-856. Papachryssanthou (*Athonite Monasticism,* 225-226) is very hesitant in accepting Kissas' interpretation of Dometianus, author of a biography of Symeon and Sabbas, the founders of the Serbian monastery of Chilandari, upon which Kissas bases his argument. On the state of Athos before the time of Athanasius and on the latter's contribution to the establishment of coenobitic monasticism, see Kallistos Ware, "St Athanasios the Athonite: Traditionalist

The existence of a monastic community on Athos is also testified by the delegation of Athonite monks who were present in Constantinople at the restoration of icons in 843.[455] Papachryssanthou argues that Athos must have been an important monastic centre from the beginning of the ninth century since its fame seems to have reached Mount Olympus in the middle of that century.[456] However, what is important for the present study is the association of Athos with the Mother of God, an association first met with in the literary sources of the *Vita* of Peter the Athonite. If we combine the information provided by the architectural study made by Mylonas, who places the construction of the earliest building of the Protaton between the middle of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth, and the study of the historiographical and literary sources by Papachryssanthou we may conclude with some certainty that Athos was not only inhabited by monks but also that it had a church dedicated to the Mother of God at the end of the ninth century.[457] If Athos was dedicated to the Virgin in the ninth

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or Innovator?" in A.Bryer and M.Cunningham (eds.), *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism,* SPBS 4, Ashgate, 1996, 3-16.

[455] Gennesios (ed. Bonn), 82. The arrival of monks from all parts of the empire is testified in practically all the historiographical sources of the period. See Papachryssanthou, *Athonite Monasticism, notes* 84 and 85 on p.82. The same author corroborates the conclusion drawn from the account of Gennesios by citing the testimony provided in the *Life* of Euthymius the Younger (or Euthymius the Thessalonikeus). For Euthymius see L. Petit, *Vie et office de saint Euthyme le Jeune,* Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis 5, Paris, 1904, 26.

[456] Papachryssanthou, *Athonite Monasticism,* 84-85. R. Morris, "The Origins of Athos," in *Mount Athos and Byzantine Monasticism,* 37-46 and esp. 37-40.

[457] Mylonas, "Les étapes successives," 144; Papachryssanthou, *Athonite Monasticism,* 84.

century, as now appears to be the case, its dedication may be linked to the place of the Virgin in the Iconoclastic controversy and, perhaps, to the attachment of the monks to devotion of the Mother of God. As we shall see in the next chapter most of the writers who composed the substantial corpus of Marian homilies and hymns in the Iconoclastic period were monks and ardent Iconophiles. Certainly, the *Vita* of Peter the Athonite gives us an opportunity to examine the first stages in the evolution of the cult of the Virgin on Mount Athos and the Holy Mountain's dedication to the Virgin.

The Vita of Michael Maleinos

The *Vita* of Michael Maleinos (d. 961) was published at the beginning of the twentieth century by Petit.[458] The hagiographer, by the name of Theophanes, was a contemporary of the saint and must have been his disciple.[459] According to the hagiographical record, the saint's parents could not have children and Michael was the answer to their prayers to the Mother of God.[460] His parents prayed to the Virgin as a last resort after their prayers to the Lord remained unanswered, a motif that is very common in hagiographical texts. The Virgin succumbed to the supplications of the couple and appeared in a dream to Methodius (the priest that was in charge of her church at Kouka) and foretold symbolically the birth of the

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[458] *Vie de Saint Michel Maléinos,* R.P.L. Petit, (ed.), ROC 7, 1902, 543-594.

[459] Petit, *op.cit.*, 545-6. In the hagiographical text Theophanes mentions explicitly that the saint entered the monastery when he was very young and stayed there until the end of his life. Theophanes says also that he spent forty years with Michael Maleinos.

[460] The parents of Michael prayed in the church of the Virgin situated in the village of Kouka. *Vie de Saint Michel Maléinos,* 4.22-29.

couple's seven children.[461] The Virgin was seen holding seven sets of garments (four female and three male) which she handed over to Anastaso, the mother of the saint. Out of the three male garments the Virgin singled out one: it was a symbolic revelation of the future saint.[462] Immediately after the dream of the priest, Anastaso, became the mother of seven fine children.[463] The choice of the saint by the Virgin is a motif often encountered in hagiographical texts.[464]

When the news that the saint, whose secular name was Manuel, had been tonsured as a monk reached his family both his parents started mourning the 'loss' of their son. His father hastened to go to the monastery and urged his son to change his mind and return home while his mother wept beating her head and shedding bitter tears. It was only later, when Michael received the great monastic habit that his parents came to terms with their son's decision. On that occasion his father advised the saint never to fail God, whom he had loved more than his parents and the world.[465] Upon his return to Ancyra, the father of the saint reminded his wife of the miraculous apparition of the Virgin in the church of Kouka where the Virgin had foretold the birth of their seven children and the dedication of the saint to herself, and urged her to glorify the Mother of God.[466]

In a way that recalls the *Vita* of Peter the Athonite, Michael moved from place to place trying to find the desert in which he could seek for his salvation.

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[461] *Ibid,* 4.29-31.

[462] *Ibid,,* 4.31-1.

[463] *Ibid,* 4.1-3.

[464] See *supra* the *Life* of Stephen the Younger.

[465] *Vie de Saint Michel Maléinos,* 10.7-11.

[466] *Ibid,* 10.11-18.

However, his virtuous life had become known to the people who travelled great distances to visit him. The monks who sought to live near the saint were also very numerous: the *Vita* records above fifty monks.[467] The growth of the community obliged Michael to move to Bithynia, where he found an appropriate place for his community to settle.[468] The first thing that the saint did was to build a big church and dedicate it to the Mother of God.[469] The *Vita* records an incident in which a disciple of the saint had stolen money pretending that it was needed for an ecclesiastical feast. But when he fell asleep he dreamt that the Mother of God and the saint were holding him by his hands; terrified, he woke up, confessed his sin and repented his evil act.[470] On this occasion the Virgin is seen as a collaborator of the saint who supports his efforts to guide the community towards its salvation. In the epilogue of the *Vita* Theophanes recounts the ascetic virtues of the saint, his abstinence from food and sleep and any luxury; he writes of one such virtue, the saint's love of the splendid feasts of the Lord and of his holy mother.[471] The reciprocity of the relationship between the saint and the Mother of God is manifested by a miracle in which the Virgin appeared in a vision to an

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[467] *Ibid,* 15.29-30. See also the similar description in the life of Sabbas the monk (eleventh century) recorded in the Acts of Philotheou monastery (W. Regel, E.Kurtz, B. Korablev (eds.), *Actes de Philothée, Actes de l'Athos* VI, *Vizantiniskij Vremmenik* XX, 1913, 1-2) and Morris, "The Origins of Athos," 37; with reference to Mount Kyminas see *ibid,* 38-39 and E. Malamut, *Sur la route des saints byzantins,* Paris, 1993, 109-126.

[468] *Vie de Saint Michel Maléinos,* 15.30-4.

[469] *Ibid,* 15.4-7.

[470] *Ibid,* 21.

[471] *Ibid,* 25.12-14.

unnamed believer in Constantinople who was celebrating her feast.[472] During the vigil and as the man was praying to the Virgin, the 'all-warm response of the tormented', that is, the Mother of God, appeared to him and told him that she had to go to the mountain of Kymina in order to celebrate together with her faithful servant Michael who faithfully expected her there.[473] Deeply moved by the vision of the Virgin the man sought to learn who was that person and as soon as he found out went to Kymina to meet the saint. On this occasion the Virgin manifested the glory of her servant to the rest of mankind, thus, in the eyes of the hagiographer and of his audience playing an important role in the process of his sanctification.

Conclusion

The place of the Mother of God in the Iconoclastic controversy is a very complicated issue that has still not received sufficient attention. Research into the subject is hampered by the scarcity of Iconoclastic sources and the bias of Iconophile texts. Moreover, both sides of the controversy supported their views by employing the same arguments and declaring their faith in the decisions of earlier previous oecumenical councils. However, a close reading of the *Acta* of the Seventh Oecumenical Council, as well as of other historiographical sources, shows that the veneration of the Mother of God was certainly an issue for debate. A tentative reconstruction of the picture reveals that, as in the case of Christ,

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[472] *Ibid*, 25.17-19, *ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει φιλοχρίστῳ τινὶ λαμπρῶς τῇ Θεοτόκῳ πανηγυρίζοντι παρ' αὐτῆς ἐν ὀπτασίᾳ δεδήλωται...*

[473] *Ibid*, 25.21-23.

Iconoclasts accepted the veneration of the Mother of God but objected to her cult and especially to the association of her veneration with the cult of images. To this assumption we are also led by the way in which Iconophiles accused the Iconoclasts of not being 'honest' when declaring their devotion to the Virgin Mary and also by the fact that in Iconophile writings the Mother of God occupies a central place thus leading us to the conclusion that Iconophile authors considered the Virgin a symbol and synonym of the cult of icons. The place of the Virgin Mary is also prominent in hagiographical texts written from the ninth century onwards. Analysis of the examples chosen for the purpose of the present study discloses the association of the Virgin with the saints and the manner in which hagiographers of the middle Byzantine period modelled their saints upon the Mother of God. In the hagiographical sources the Virgin Mary acts as a protectress and guide to the saint whose life is narrated and is often seen as expelling the demons and safeguarding the saints and the people alike. In the case of the *Vita* of Peter the Athonite the Virgin is seen choosing the Holy Mountain as her special preserve, extending her protection to it and prophesying its glorious future. We shall have the occasion to complete the picture at the end of the present study, but for the time being it suffices to note that the association of Athos with the Mother of God should not be considered accidental but a result of the prominence given to the Virgin during the Iconoclastic period and of her association with the essential premises of the Orthodox faith as promulgated at the time of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. On the basis of the above we are now in a position to explain the existence of the vast corpus of Marian homilies and hymns

composed during the Iconoclastic period by Iconophile writers. This corpus will be examined in the next chapter and found to support the views just expressed.

CHAPTER IV

MARIAN LITERATURE OF THE ICONOCLASTIC PERIOD

Introduction

During the eighth and ninth centuries Iconophile authors produced a voluminous corpus of homilies and hymns dedicated to the Mother of God. Most of this literature was composed for use on various occasions of feasts of the Virgin Mary. In the previous chapter I suggested that the prominence of the place of the Virgin in the Iconoclastic controversy finds further support in the compilation of the Marian literary corpus. The homilies in honour of the Virgin that were composed during the Iconoclastic period may be considered as a sub-division of the wider category of middle Byzantine homiletics, a category with its own particular characteristics. To my knowledge, there has been no comprehensive study of middle Byzantine homiletics, particularly of the corpus of Marian literature produced during the time of the controversy over artistic representation in Byzantium.

The quantity and nature of Marian literature in the Iconoclastic period, on which I will concentrate in the first part of this chapter, is particularly revealing of the cult of the Virgin Mary in the period under consideration. My aim is to trace the symbolic language employed by contemporary writers and shared with their readers. Special attention will be given to the homilies and hymns composed by Germanos I of Constantinople, Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus and Theodore the Stoudite. The literary work of these authors is characterised by a distinct

lyrical or emotional tone as well as by emphasis on the body and the senses that as yet have not been analysed. I suggest that the stylistic features of the literature of the Iconoclastic era as well as the choice of the Mother of God as the subject of a great part of the literary production of the period are linked to the Christological issue underlying the controversy over the cult of images. In other words, both the emphasis on emotions, the body, and the senses, as well as the emphasis on the Mother of God were means employed by the Iconophile writers of the period in their defence of artistic representation. Although scholarly research has pointed out that Marian literature of the time depicts the Virgin in a much more personal and emotional way, no explanation has been offered for the emergence and the significance of this Marian corpus which coincided with the debate over the portrayal of the divine in the visual arts of Byzantium.[474] The case becomes even more intriguing when we consider that the authors of the Marian homilies and hymns studied in this chapter were ardent Iconophiles. However, the study of the homiletic and hymnographical corpus of the period is not a simple task since the researcher is faced with the common problem of lack of critical editions and the often mistaken attribution of works.

The second part of this chapter will focus on the central place that the themes of the Passion and the Burial of the Lord occupy in the literature of the

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[474] Gordana Babic ("Les Images byzantines et leurs degrés de signification: l'exemple de l'Hodigitria," *Byzance et les Images*, Paris, 1994, 189-222 and esp. 197) notes that "Le degré de compréhension des images byzantines dépend donc de la possibilité de l'homme moderne de saisir non seulement les pensées mais aussi les sentiments des Byzantins."

Iconoclastic period. Particular attention will be drawn to the association of the person of the Virgin with the themes of the Passion and the Burial. The lament of the Virgin in the Iconoclastic period is best represented by the short poems of Theodore the Stoudite, the ardent opponent of Iconoclasm and author of numerous hymns and homilies.[475] In addition, a text of dubious authorship, ascribed either to patriarch Germanos I of Constantinople or to Germanos II in a much later period, will be examined as the model of the lament of the Virgin in the second half of the ninth century; as I argue below, its author was Germanos I, the patriarch deposed by the first Iconoclast emperor in 730.

In the last Christological debate of the Byzantine Church, the Iconophiles focused on the Incarnation of the Word, and defended the Church's religious practice, namely the veneration of icons, on the basis of the historical reality of the Incarnation.[476] The prominence of the Mother of God during the Iconoclastic period may be explained by any of the following facts:

i. During the pre-Iconoclastic period, especially during the difficult time of the Arab conquest the Virgin became the centre of devotion that is also often associated with the veneration of icons.[477] The moto of the Iconoclasts was the

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[475] For the political dimension of Theodore's career see P. Karlin-Hayter, "A Byzantine Politician Monk: Saint Theodore Studite," *JÖB* 44, 1994, 217-232.

[476] See below the argument set forth by John of Damascus and taken up by other Iconophiles that the Word of God may be depicted in matter because he became human in the womb of Mary.

[477] For the cult of the Virgin before Iconoclasm, see chapter II. Note also the parallel development of the cult of the saints as objects of veneration and sources of authority, and protection of cities from the sixth century onwards. The phenomenon becomes especially acute in the seventh century, a time when the empire was struggling for

worship of God "in *spirit* and truth" (Jn. 4:24). [478] Thus, the controversy over artistic representation may be considered as an attempt to rid religion of 'popular' elements, such as the cult of icons and the closely associated cult of the Virgin.[479]

ii. The role of the Mother of God in the Incarnation and the exalted status she acquired at the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon had a direct bearing upon the status of *matter,* one of the main bones of contention during the Iconoclastic debate.[480] The Iconophiles defended the veneration of icons on the grounds that

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survival. For the parallel function of divine patrons and icons see J.F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge, 1990, 406; R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold. Byzantine Society and its Icons,* London, 1985, 77-78 for St Demetrius in Thessaloniki. For the miracles of the saint, see P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius*, 2 vols. (texte-commentaire), Paris, 1979 and 1981 respectively; see esp. vol. I, XIII-XV for the miracles illustrating the protection of Thessaloniki by the saint and note the parallel with the miracle of the Virgin delivering Constantinople from the threat of the Avars and the Persians in 626.

[478] For the background of the spiritual currents in Byzantium see I. Hausherr, "Les grands courants de la spiritualité orientale," *OCP* I, 1935, 114-138. Cf. M. Plested, "Macarius and Diadochus: An Essay in Comparison," *Studia Patristica* XXX, 1997, 235-240 where the author argues for the narrowing of the gap between the two spiritual traditions represented by Diadochus of Photike and Macarius respectively. For the Iconoclastic period see R. Taft, "The Synaxarion of Evergetis in the history of Byzantine liturgy," *The Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism*, M. Mullett and A. Kirby (eds.), BBTT 6.1, Belfast, 1994, 274-294, and esp. 281-282. Note also the emphasis given to the human as the true imago Dei and the formulation of what is called 'the ethical theory of images' after the study by M. Anastos, "The Ethical Theory of Images Formulated by the Iconoclasts in 754 and 815," *DOP* 8, 1954, 151-160.

[479] Averil Cameron, "The Language of Images," 18-19.

[480] For the role of Mary in the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon see chapter II and P.-Th. Camelot, *Éphèse et Chalcèdoine,* Histoire des conciles œcuméniques 2, Paris, 1962, 65-70 and 146-147.

matter had been sanctified at the time of the Incarnation because it was assumed by the Word of God and thus could be used to represent the divine.[481] The Mother of God -already in the fifth century a key figure for the understanding of the Incarnation- became once again the instrument for defining and applying incarnational theology.

These statements will be examined in the light of their particular sources and will be re-evaluated in the conclusion of the chapter.

Germanos I of Constantinople and Andrew of Crete

The patriarch of Constantinople Germanos I and his contemporary Andrew of Crete are two of the most important figures of the first Iconoclastic period. Their acceptance of the orders given by Philippikos-Bardanes (711-713) regarding endorsement of monotheletism and anathematization of the Sixth Oecumenical Council stained their names. Germanos I (c.630 or 650 - d.after 730) was elected bishop of Cyzicus in c. 705.[482] After the fall of Philippikos-Bardanes he opposed monotheletism and became patriarch of Constantinople in 715. Although in the early years of the reign of Leo III the emperor and the patriarch were on good terms, later they fell out and Germanos was deposed from the patriarchal throne in 730 to be succeeded by Anastasios (730-754).[483] The

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[481] See below.

[482] For the various dates proposed see A. Kazhdan, "Germanos I," *ODB,* vol. II, 846.

[483] L. Lamza, *Patriarch Germanos I. von Konstantinopel (715-730),* Würzburg, 1975. With regard to the various views expressed on the patriarchate of Germanos see 160-161.

circumstances which led to the breach between the emperor and the patriarch are not known.[484] Probably it was Germanos who questioned the Paulician Gegnesios on matters of doctrine such as the sacraments, the veneration of the Cross and, most significantly, the veneration of the Virgin Mary.[485] According to Kazhdan a likely cause of the conflict between Germanos and Leo III was the subject of the Mother of God to whom Germanos dedicated a large number of homilies and hymns.[486] Unfortunately, the corpus of Germanos's writings has not yet been fully defined. Particularly problematic is the confusion that often arises over the authorship of works by the patriarchs Germanos I and II due to the similar literary style of the two writers. That Germanos II, himself wrote homilies on the Virgin, on the Incarnation and on the refutation of the impious Nestorius only confuses the issue still further.[487]

As far as Andrew of Crete (c.660-740)[488] is concerned his acceptance of the orders given by Philippikos-Bardanes suggested he was willing to exploit the

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[484] *Ibid,* 144.

[485] Peter of Sicily, PG 104, cols. 1284B-1285A.

[486] A. Kazhdan, "Germanos I," *ODB*, vol. II, 846-847.

[487] S.N. Lagopates, *Γερμανὸς ὁ Β', Πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως-Νικαίας (1222-1240). Βίος, Συγγράμματα καὶ Διδασκαλία αὐτοῦ,* Tripolis, 1914, 218ff., 310-320.

[488] Andrew's early life was marked by a miracle that probably became the reason for his early tonsure as a monk (at the age of fourteen or fifteen) in the Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. According to the encomion of the saint written by the patrician Nicetas and preserved in the codex 79 of Vatopedi (tenth century), Saint Andrew of Crete, also called the Hierosolymites, was mute until the age of seven and recovered his ability to talk only after receiving communion in a church of his native city, Damascus. He was made notary of the Great Basilica in Jerusalem by Theodore, the local *τοποτηρητὴς,* who replaced Sophronius after his death in 638 (note that Jerusalem did

notion of *oikonomia* in order to avoid friction with authority.[489] Andrew is well known for his Great Canon, a devotional work that is still in use in the Orthodox Church, and also for numerous homilies and hymns that he wrote while metropolitan of Crete.[490] It is evident from what we know about his life that

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not have a patriarchate for some time after 638 since it was already under the Arab rule). For the *Life* of Andrew by Nicetas see M. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Analecta Hierosolymitikes Stachyologias,* vol. 5, Petersburg, 1898, 169-179. For a discussion of his biographical sources see S. Vailhé, "Saint André de Crète," *EO* 5, Nos.32-37, 1901-1902, 378-387 and esp. 378-380. See also H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich,* Munich, 1959, 500-502 and recently M.-F. Auzépy, "La Carrière d'André de Crète," *BZ* 88, 1995, 1-12.

[489] For the religious policies of Philippikos-Bardanes and the involvement in them of Andrew of Crete and Germanos I of Constantinople see Theophanes, (de Boor), I 362 and 382. See also Nicephorus, *Breviarium,* (de Boor), 48 and the discussion of the sources by Vailhé, *op. cit.,* 383-384.

[490] Between 692 and 713 he was metropolitan of Crete following a few years in Constantinople. In 685 Andrew was sent by Theodore as a legate to the emperor Constantine Pogonatos in order to convey to the emperor the enthusiastic acceptance of the decisions of the Sixth Oecumenical Council by Theodore and his Church. By the time he arrived in Constantinople, Constantine was already dead and Justinian II reigned in his place. Andrew remained in Constantinople when the other legates of Theodore set out to return to Jerusalem, and was put in charge of certain charitable institutions (an orphanage and a hospital or place of retreat). His successful administration was rewarded with his appointment as metropolitan of Crete. While in Constantinople he is said to have become famous as a rhetor. See Tomadakis, *Byzantine Hymnography,* 189; A. Vacant, "André de Crète," *DThC,* vol. 1, 1900, cols. 1822-1884; for dates, see Vailhé, *op.cit.,* 381. For the works of Andrew of Crete see Geerard, *CPG,* vol. III, 541-551 and for Andrew as a preacher see M. B. Cunningham, *Andreas of Crete's Homilies on Lazarus and Palm Sunday: A Critical Edition and Commentary,* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1983, 2-8 and 25 ff. and *eadem,* "Andreas of Crete's Homilies on Lazarus and Palm Sunday: The Preacher and his Audience," in P. Allen and M. B. Cunningham (eds.), *The Preacher and his Audience,* Leiden, (forthcoming).

Andrew's interest lay mainly in pastoral activities rather than in ecclesiastical politics. After the brief reign of Philippikos-Bardanes, Andrew changed his mind and confessed his faith in the decisions of the Sixth Oecumenical Council, a *volte face* that betrayed him as having no strong views on the subject.[491] Andrew did not live to see the reign of Constantine V (he died one year before the latter's accession to the throne). He is recognised as a fervent Iconophile and the first to appeal to tradition in order to defend the cult of images.[492]

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[491] A. Heisenberg, "Ein jambisches Gedicht des Andreas von Kreta," *BZ* X, 1901, 505-514 and esp. 508-512 in which the author presents a critical edition of the poem Andrew sent to Agathon, the archdeacon and chartophylax of the Great Church, together with the signed copy of the acts of the Sixth Oecumenical Council.

[492] Andrew of Crete, *De Sanctarum Imaginum Veneratione*, (fr.), (BHG 1125), PG 97, cols. 1301-1304. For the *florilegia* of patristic texts composed during the Iconoclastic period see A.Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and its Archetype,* Dumbarton Oaks Studies XXXIV, Washington D.C., 1996, 31-37 and 227-233. See also the discussion by Averil Cameron ("The History of the Image of Edessa," 80-94) and Belting (*Likeness and Presence,* 49-55). Belting points out that icons 'not made by human hands' functioned as proof of their own authenticity and hence of the authenticity of their prototypes. The story of the image of Edessa was later used by Nicephorus in his *Antirrheticus* I, PG 100, col. 260 and *Antirrheticus* III, PG 100, col. 461. Cf. the *Letter of the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem to the Emperor Theophilos in the year 836,* the longest section of which consists of a list of miraculous images. For the text see now the edition by J.A. [illegible], J. Chrysostomides et. al. (eds.), *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs and Related Texts,* Surrey, 1997, and esp. 29-51 and for discussion see L. Duchesne, "L'iconographie byzantine dans un document grec du IXe siècle," *Roma e l'Oriente* 5, 1912-1913, 222-239, 273-285, 349-366 and Cormack, *Writing in Gold,* 122-124 and 261-262.

The Literary Opus *of Germanos I*

Of the surviving homilies of Germanos I there are at least nine sermons delivered on various feasts of the Virgin Mary.[493] The Marian homilies consist of three on the Presentation of the Virgin,[494] one on the Annunciation,[495] four on the Dormition,[496] one on the Akathistos[497] and another on the inauguration of a

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[493] Geerard, *CPG*, vol. III, nos. 8007-8015.

[494] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Ingressum Sanctissimae Deiparae*, (BHG 1103), PG 98, cols. 292-309; *idem, Encomium in sanctam Deiparam: quando triennis praesentata est in templo, ac in Sancta Sanctorum a suis parentibus illata*, (BHGa 1104), PG 98, cols. 309-320; *idem, Homilia in Praesentationem*, (fragm.), (BHG 1076w), published by E. Toniolo, "Sull'ingresso della Vergine nel santo dei santi. Una finale inedita di omelia bizantina," *Marianum* 36, 1974, 101-105.

[495] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Sanctissimae Dei Genitricis Annuntiationem*, (BHG 1145n-q, BHGa 1145n-r), PG 98, cols. 320-340.

[496] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In omni veneratione prosequendam sanctae Dei Genitricis Dormitionem,* (BHG 1119), PG 98, cols. 340-348; *idem, In beatam sanctissimae Dominae nostrae Deiparae semperque Virginis Mariae Dormitionem,*(BHG 1135), PG 98, cols. 348-357; *idem, Laudatio in sanctam ac venerabitem Dormitionem pregloriosae Dominae nostrae Dei Genitricis semper virginis Maria,* (BHG 1155, BHGa 1155b), PG 98, cols. 360-372. Another homily on the Dormition is published by A. Wenger, "Un nouveau témoin de l'Assomption: une homélie attribuée à saint Germain de Constantinople," *REB* XVI (*Mélanges Sévérien Salaville*), 1958, 43-58.

[497] Germanos I of Constantinople, *Homilia de Acathisto vel de Dormitione*, (BHG 1130s). For the text see V. Grumel, "Homélie de saint Germain sur la délivrance de Constantinople," *REB* 16, 1958, 183-205. Cf. P. Speck, "Klassizismus im achten Jahrhundert? Die Homelie des Patriarchen Germanos über die Rettung Konstantinopels," *REB* 44, 1986, 209-227. Speck does not believe that the homily was written by Germanos; however, following the article by J. Darrouzès ("Deux textes inédits du Patriarche Germaine," *REB* 45, 1987, 5-13) who ascribes the authorship to Germanos I, the question seems resolved.

church dedicated to the Virgin Mary.[498] Particularly interesting is the homily on the Akathistos, where the homilist relates the miraculous intervention of the Virgin Mary who delivered the imperial City from an Arab siege in 717.[499] The florid and lyrical style of the orator is echoed in the literary representation of Mary. Germanos draws his imagery from the typology of the Virgin and the Song of Songs.[500] In a highly encomiastic context, the Virgin is described by a long string of attributes and lyrical images that are not to be found in earlier writings. Germanos' homily marks a clear change in the manner of praising Mary. Andrew of Crete attaches similar importance to the person of the Virgin,[501] but Germanos is more innovative in that he introduces elaborate dialogues in his sermons.[502] In

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[498] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Encaenia venerandae aedis sanctissimae Dominae nostrae Dei Genitricis, inque sanctas fascias Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, (BHG 1086), PG 98, cols. 372-384.

[499] The homily was originally published by Grumel, "Homélie de Saint Germain sur la délivrance de Constantinople," 183-205. In the text edited by Darrouzès ("Deux textes inédits du Patriarche Germaine," 13) the miraculous intervention of the Virgin, protectress of Constantinople, was portrayed above the Gate of the City turning her precious gaze upon the horse ridden by the blasphemer and making it shy... so that the *amiras* should pass through the gate of the Virgin not as a master but as a slave. The miraculous intervention of the Virgin is attested in Theophanes (de Boor), I, 396. For a discussion of the siege see Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III*, 32-43. For a parallel incident dating to the beginning of the seventh century (siege of 626) see Averil Cameron, "The Virgin's Robe," 42-56. For the Akathistos hymn see chapter II.

[500] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In ingressum sanctissimae Deiparae*, PG 98, col. 292. See also *ibidem*, col. 297 C-D.

[501] See below.

[502] J. List, *Studien zur Homiletik Germanos I. von Konstantinopel und seiner Zeit*, Athens, 1939.

his homily on the Annunciation, Germanos invents a sophisticated dialogue between the Archangel and the Virgin in which the two persons "converse on different stylistic levels, the archangel being majestic and the Virgin simple and naive."[503] This dialogue is followed by another between the Virgin and Joseph in which the Virgin attempts to enlighten him regarding recent events and her inexplicable pregnancy.[504] The homilist elaborates the typological imagery of Mary, adding epithets and images that increase the emotional power of the sermon. Germanos describes the Mother of God as the counterpart of the First Eve who displayed an uncritical reliance on the serpent while she is suspicious even of the Archangel.[505]

In a form that resembles the Akathistos, Germanos makes the greeting of the archangel the opening word of each of eleven paragraphs that praise the Virgin on the occasion of her Presentation in the temple. Mary is exalted as the divinely-made (ἱερότευκτον), all-pure and immaculate palace of God,[506] the new Sion, the divine Jerusalem, the holy city of the great king God.[507] Germanos seems to be alluding to the Iconoclastic debate when he hails the Theotokos as the fearsome protector of those who acknowledge her as Theotokos, *with an honest*

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[503] Kazhdan, "Germanos I," 846.

[504] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Annunciationem*, cols. 332-340.

[505] *Ibid,* col. 325, **"The angel:** Why and for what reason and for whom do you not believe my message, o highly favoured one? and until when will you not obey the angel sent to you from heaven? For I am not the one who deceived Eve."

[506] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Praesentationem*, col.305C.

[507] *Ibid*, col.305D.

heart.[508] Elsewhere the homilist refers again to those who do not wish to confess the Theotokos *in faith* and who will be judged accordingly at the Last Judgement.[509] As we have seen, in the *Acts* of the Seventh Oecumenical Council the Iconophiles closely questioned the sincerity of the Iconoclasts' confession of the Theotokos.[510] He is alluding to the same heresy when he asks the Theotokos to intercede with her son to guard the Church from the influence of heresies and scandals.[511] As already noted, the intercession of the Virgin became an issue during the Iconoclastic controversy and is often given prominence in the sermons of Germanos.[512] In the second homily on the Dormition, Germanos asserts that one cannot know God but through the Theotokos; nobody can be saved, and nobody can be safe from danger but through the Mother of God.[513] The popular devotion to Mary is borne out in the same homily in which he says that the Theotokos is always on the lips of Christians who call upon her for help even

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[508] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Annuntiationem*, col.321B, *Χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη, θύρα θλιβομένων, καὶ προστασία φοβερὰ, τῶν εἰλικρινεῖ καρδίᾳ θεοτόκον ὁμολογούντων σε.*

[509] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Dormitionem* II, cols. 353C-356A.

[510] See above, chapter III.

[511] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Praesentationem*, col. 308C-D.

[512] See for example, Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Dormitionem* I, col. 341A-B. In the same homily the Virgin is portrayed as the intermediary between man and God for on the one hand she bore God in her womb while on the other she gave God her human flesh, *ibidem,* col. 344 B-C.

[513] Germanos I of Constantinople, *In Dormitionem* II, col. 349B-C, "nobody can be saved without your intercession, Theotokos; nobody can be free of danger without your intercession, Virgin-mother; nobody can be delivered without your intercession, *Theometor*; nobody receives the gift of mercy without your intercession, the one who contained God (Θεοχώρητε)."

when they stub their foot on a stone.[514] The assertion made by Germanos is in absolute accordance with one made by Theophanes, who says that at the end of Constantine's reign people were scared of being punished if unwarily they exclaimed "*Θεοτόκε βοήθει*."[515]

The Literary Opus *of Andrew of Crete*

In his treatise *On the Divine Images,* of which only a fragment survives, Andrew does not appeal merely to the story of the image of Edessa but refers also to the *acheiropoietos* image of the Virgin in Lydda, the so-called Diospolis. According to Andrew this image dates from the time of the apostles and was still venerated in his day. Refuting the charge of idolatry, Andrew cites the example of Julian who heard about this image and sent Jewish artists to examine it. After the artists testified to the truth of the story, Julian did it no harm.[516] Using this example, Andrew makes the point that images were respected even by pagans (Julian) and Jews (artists) and indirectly accuses Iconoclasts of being worse than unbelievers. In the second example he cites, in which the Virgin tells the apostles that *she is everywhere where her icon is,* Andrew expresses in his narrative the theology of images as formulated by John of Damascus, albeit John employed a much more sophisticated idiom.[517] The third example Andrew brings to the attention of the reader is the legend of the icon of the Virgin painted by St Luke

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[514] *Ibid*, col. 352C-D.

[515] Theophanes, (de Boor), I 442, lines 30-31.

[516] Andrew of Crete, *De Sanctarum Imaginum Veneratione*, col. 1304A.

[517] *Ibid*, col. 1304B.

from life.[518] In this version of the story Luke did not paint only the Virgin but also the incarnate Christ.[519]

In the account given by Andrew the 'historicity' of the representation of Christ is attested by an unbeliever. The testimony of a Jew called Iosipos who had supposedly seen the Lord and described him as a man with dense eyebrows, big eyes and a narrow face is introduced into the story in order to confirm its authenticity.[520] The treatise by Andrew on the veneration of holy images is an early apologetic text which clearly demonstrates that the Virgin Mary occupied a key role in the defence of images from the very beginning of the Iconoclastic controversy. Of the three examples quoted by Andrew of Crete, two refer to the Virgin. The appeal by Andrew to familiar stories gives us a measure of the devotion to the Virgin at the beginning of the eighth century. With regard to her place in Iconoclasm, let us first examine the rest of Andrew's writings.

The majority of the surviving works by Andrew of Crete consists of encomia written on the occasion of feasts of the Lord, the Mother of God, the apostles and the martyrs. Approximately one third of his corpus consists of Marian homilies on the Conception, Nativity, Annunciation, Dormition, and other

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[518] The icon supposedly painted by the evangelist was of the Hodegetria type. For the legends associated with the icon see Belting, *Likeness and Presence,* 57 ff.; L. Ouspensky and V. Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, Crestwood, New York, 1989, 80-81 and M. B. Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos*, BBTT 1, Belfast, 1991, 66 and n.93 on p.148.

[519] Andrew of Crete, *De Sanctarum Imaginum Veneratione*, col. 1304B-C, *Λουκᾶν τον ἀπόστολον και εὐαγγελιστην ἅπαντες οἱ τότε εἰρήκασιν οἰκείαις ζωγραφῆσαι χερσιν αὐτόν τε τον σαρκωθέντα Χριστον, και την αὐτοῦ ἄχραντον Μητέρα, ...*

[520] *Ibid*, col. 1304C.

events in the life of the Virgin Mary.[521] In the iambic verses he sent to Agathon, Andrew asserts the doctrine of the Incarnation as formulated in the councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon laying particular emphasis on the birth of the Word of God by Mary in whose womb God and man became one.[522] Of great importance to the development of the cult of Mary is the incorporation of the *theotokion*, a particular strophe dedicated to the Virgin at the end of each ode of the Great Canon.[523] In the *theotokia*, the poet begs the Virgin, the hope and protection of those who glorify her, to mediate with Christ for the salvation of his soul that has become like the first Eve.[524] The Virgin is referred to as "the Mother of our life,"[525] the one who "gives birth being yet remains a virgin,"[526] through whom Christ "united himself to human nature".[527] The closing lines of the Canon echo the protecting Virgin who reigned in Constantinople in full majesty since the

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[521] Tomadakis, *Byzantine Hymnography,* 195.

[522] Heisenberg, *op.cit.*, 510-511, *Ἡ συνδραμοῦσα τῷ λόγῳ σαρκουμένῳ/ Ἐπεσκίασεν ἐνθέως τῇ παρθένῳ, / Ἐντεῦθεν ὥσπερ κυρίως θεητόκος/ Ὡς αὐτὸν γεννήσασα τὸν θεον λόγον/ Κηρύττεταί τε καὶ σεβάζεται μόνη. /(...) /Καὶ σάρξ πεφηνως εἷς μετ'αὐτῆς ἐκράθη / Φυρμοῦ τε χωρὶς καὶ τροπῆς δίχα... /*

[523] On the *theotokia* see I. Fountoulis, "Theotokion," *MThHE,* vol. 6, Athens, 1965, col. 317; Tomadakis, *Byzantine Hymnography,* 65.

[524] Andrew of Crete, *Great Canon*, in Cantarella, *Poeti Bizantini*, 100-111. Also published by W. Christ- M. Paranikas, *Anthologia Graeca Carminum Christianorum,* (henceforth cited as Christ-Paranikas, AGCC) Leipzig, 1871, 147-161. See esp., ode I, verse 17, "Alas, wretched soul, why did you become like the first Eve?" and I, verse 33, "Theotokos, hope and protection of those who glorify you..."

[525] *Ibid*, ode III, 86.

[526] *Ibid*, ode IV, 147.

[527] *Ibid*, ode V, 177-179.

sixth century.[528] The imagery used by Andrew in his treatment of the Virgin derives from the stock material of previous centuries. In this respect no major innovations are to be noted in the Great Canon which repeats the formula of the Akathistos especially in the third ode.[529] However, the incorporation of the *theotokia* into the work attests to the growing cult of the Virgin and especially to the importance that the cult had acquired in Christian worship. We are led to the same conclusion by the prominence of Mary in other hymnographical works of Andrew in which the Theotokos not only appears in the concluding *theotokia* but often becomes the central theme of the hymn. Characteristic of these works are the canons, *triodia* and *troparia* published by Migne.[530] If we can say that one third of the homiletic work of Andrew is dedicated to the Virgin, in the case of his hymns the proportion rises to well over three-quarters. Even the canon on

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[528] *Ibid*, ode VIII, 331-336, "Guard your city, all-pure bearer of God. In you she faithfully reigns, in you she is strong and in you she is victorious triumphing over every temptation and harrowing the enemies and guiding the citizens."

[529] *Ibid*, ode III, 85-86, *Χαῖρε θεοδόχε γαστὴρ, χαῖρε θρόνε κυρίου, χαῖρε ἡ μήτηρ τῆς ζωῆς ἡμῶν.* Note the use of the same formula in the homily *On the Annunciation,* PG 97, cols. 881-913 and esp. cols. 893-896. For the Akathistos see E. Wellesz, "The Akathistos. A Study in Byzantine Hymnography," *DOP* 9-10, 1955-1956, 143-174; Averil Cameron, "The Virgin's Robe: an Episode in the History of Early Seventh-Century Constantinople," *Byzantion* XLIX, 1979, 42-56 and esp. 44-46.

[530] Andrew of Crete, *Canones Praecipui et Triodia*, PG 97, 1305-1444. See also, S. Eustratiades, "Ἀνδρέας ὁ Κρήτης ὁ Ἱεροσολυμίτης," *Nea Sion* 29, 1934, 673-688 and *idem*, *Nea Sion* 30, 1935, 3-10, 147-153, 209-217, 269-283, 462-477; C. Emereau, "Hymnographi Byzantini," *EO* 21, 1922, 258-279 and esp. 267-271. On the vocabulary of Andrew see Th. Detorakis, "Le vocabulaire d'André de Crète," *JÖB* 36, 1986, 45-60.

Lazarus[531] is interspersed with *theotokia* that in Andrew's day seem to have become a standard feature of ecclesiastical hymnography. The corpus of Marian hymns was subsequently to be enriched by the work of celebrated hymnographers like Cosmas of Maiouma (c. 674/6-752/4) and Theodore the Stoudite (759-826). Eventually they were introduced into the standard service books of the official Church.

The Marian homilies that survive in association with the name of Andrew of Crete are the following: four homilies on the Nativity of the Virgin,[532] one on the Annunciation,[533] three on the Dormition,[534] and one on the Akathistos.[535] A detailed analysis of the homilies would be out of place at this point. It is worth noting, however, that Andrew focuses on the Virgin as a worthy recipient of veneration and worship through whom the salvation of mankind was made possible. The paradox of Mary's birth is matched by the paradox of the Nativity of the Lord and of the Incarnation as a whole.[536] Both in the hymnographical and in the homiletic work of Andrew the typological images of the Virgin are used and elaborated within an encomiastic context.[537]

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[531] Andrew of Crete, *Canon in Lazarum*, PG 97, cols.1385-1397.

[532] All four are published in PG 97, cols. 805-820, 820-844, 844-861, 861-881 respectively.

[533] Andrew of Crete, *In Annunciationem*, PG 97, cols. 881-913.

[534] Andrew of Crete, *In Dormitionem* I, PG 97, cols. 1045-1072; *In Dormitionem* II, cols. 1072-1089, *In Dormitionem* III, cols. 1089-1109.

[535] BHG 1140; P.T. Themelis, "Ὁ Ἀκάθιστος Ὕμνος," *Nea Sion* 6, 1907, 826-833.

[536] See for example the first homily on the Nativity, Andrew of Crete, *In Nativitatem Sanctissimae Deiparae*, PG 97, cols. 804-820 and esp. col. 809.

[537] See among others, *In Nativitatem* IV, cols. 868-872.

John of Damascus

Perhaps the most celebrated Iconophile writer is John of Damascus (675-749), who is justly credited with the fullest formulation of the theology of images.[538] Less famous than John's treatises in defence of the holy icons are his Marian homilies and hymns.[539] Of the homilies that John wrote in honour of the Mother of God there survive three attested homilies on the Dormition and one on the Nativity, but the authenticity of the latter has been challenged.[540]

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[538] For the identity and the historical circumstances that determined John's life see M.-F. Auzépy, "De la Palestine à Constantinople (VIIIe-IXe siècles): Étienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène," *TM* 12, 1994, 183-218. For his theology of images see John of Damascus, *Orationes de Imaginibus tres,* (BHG 1391e-g), in Kotter III, pp. 65-200. John's dogmatic views are also expressed in his works *Expositio Fidei* (Kotter II, Berlin, 1973) and *De Haeresibus* (PG 94, cols. 677-780) which although they do not refer directly to the veneration of images they reveal John's views on incarnational theology. For discussion of the last text see Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Leo III,* 67-71. The homiletic corpus of John is still not determined with any certainty. An illustration of the complicated issue of attribution is the recent discussion by Armitage with respect to the homily *De Corpore et Sanguine Christi.* Despite the detailed analysis of this text, authorship is still an open question. See N. Armitage, "The Theology of the Introduction and Sermon 'De Corpore et Sanguine Christi' attributed to John of Damascus," *Oriens Christianus* 80, 1996, 1-10. See also below with reference to the homily on the Nativity.

[539] The importance of the Marian homilies of John of Damascus to the development of homiletics and as a source of information about contemporary circumstances is studied by C. Chevalier, "La Mariologie de S. Jean Damascène," *OCA* 109, Rome, 1936 and recently by A. Louth in his article "St John of Damascus: Preacher and Poet," in P. Allen and M. Cunningham (eds.), *The Preacher and His Audience, Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics,* Leiden, (forthcoming).

[540] The authorship of the homily on the Nativity of the Virgin is partially accepted by Kotter V, 150-152. Kotter discusses older views and points out the interpolations of the

The three homilies on the Dormition must have been delivered at different times on the same day, thus forming what Chevalier has termed a homiletic 'trilogy'.[541]

In the homily on the Nativity the human birth and nature of the Theotokos are praised together with her sanctity and purity.[542] John employs puns and poetic images to emphasize the string of paradoxes that brought about the assumption of human nature by the Word of God and its subsequent salvation.[543] All the typological references to the Virgin are repeated and elaborated in connexion with the Incarnation.[544] In the second homily on the Dormition, the Virgin is presented

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text. For older editions with translation in French and Greek respectively see P. Voulet (ed.), *S. Jean Damascène. Homélies sur la nativité et la dormition,* SC 80, Paris, 1961; A.Yeftits (ed.), *Hagiou Ioannou Damascenou, Ἡ Θεοτόκος,* Athens, 1970; Geerard, *CPG,* vol. III, 519 (8060). The most recent critical edition of the homilies is in Kotter V.

[541] For homiletic trilogies see Chevalier, "Les Trilogies homilétiques dans l'élaboration des fêtes mariales. 650-850," 361-378; Kotter V, 463-464; Louth, "St John of Damascus: Preacher and Poet,"(forthcoming).

[542] John of Damascus, *On the Nativity,* Kotter V, 169-182, and esp. 2.13-17 on p. 170. (For the sake of accuracy all references to the homilies by John of Damascus indicate the title of the homily followed by the paragraph, line and page number in Kotter's edition.)

[543] *On the Nativity,* 3. 1-4, p. 171. See also, 5. 3-6, p. 173 where the Virgin is described as Joachim and Anna's worthy offspring, who remained a virgin throughout her life.

[544] *Ibid,* 3. 4-5, p. 171, *Σήμερον ἐκ ῥίζης Ἰεσσαὶ ῥάβδος ἐφύη, ἐξ ἧς ἄνθος ἀναβήσεται τῷ κόσμῳ θεοϋπόστατον.* The word *θεοϋπόστατος* is encountered also in a spurious homily on the Annunciation ascribed to Athanasius of Alexandria (PG 28, col. 925B), in a homily of Germanos I of Constantinople (PG 98, col. 221 C) and in a poem on the Theotokos probably by John of Damascus. It means 'of divine hypostasis' and the metaphor in the passage cited refers to Christ. The parallel between the root of Jesse and the Virgin from which the flower of divine hypostasis was born is a typical example of the way that traditional images were enriched with the individual authors' own original

as the model of virginity, sobriety and wisdom and the author encourages his audience to follow not only her example but also the ethical imperatives expressed in terms of what she approves of and what she despises.[545] John portrays the Mother of God as the ornament of mankind, the pride of the whole of creation, the one chosen to serve the divine economy;[546] through her what was previously impossible to be contained was contained for one end only: the salvation of mankind.[547] The holiness of the Virgin is directly associated with her role in the divine plan and a soteriological aspect is detected in every reference to her holiness or her miraculous childbearing. The Theotokos is described in the words of the Psalm (Ps. 86:3) as the city of God, the city which was chosen by God, who can hold the whole creation in the palm of his hand, as his dwelling

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contrivances expressed through the use of vocabulary and poetic images. See s.v. *θεοϋπόστατος*, Lampe, *PGL*, 641. For other typological references see 4. 1-3, p.172; 6. 27-33, p.175 etc. See also John of Damascus, *On the Dormition* I, in Kotter V, pp. 483-500 and esp. 8.20-51, pp. 492-493, where the Virgin is described as the kingly throne and the intelligible Eden. The typological images applied to the Theotokos are the burning bush, the tabernacle, the golden vessel, the lamp, the altar, the rod of Aaron and the ladder of Jacob. See also, John of Damascus, *On the Dormition* III, in Kotter V, 548-555, and esp. 2.1-20, pp. 549-550; 2.37-39, p. 550 etc.

[545] John of Damascus, *On the Dormition* II, 19.7-23, pp. 539-540.

[546] *Idem*, *On the Dormition* I, 3.3-4, p. 485, *την ἀγαθοδότιν, την πλουτοδότειραν, τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου γένους τὸ ἐγκαλλώπισμα, το καύχημα πάσης τῆς κτίσεως...*

[547] *Ibid*, 3.5, p. 485, "what could not be contained before through you it was contained"; 3.43-46, p. 487, "For you, Lord, you have assumed the whole Adam before the Fall through your mercy; the internal parts, the body, the soul, and their characteristic properties so as to grant salvation to my entire (existence); for indeed, what was not assumed was not saved." It is interesting to note the importance that Gregory

place.[548] The person of Christ is also prominent;[549] further, the author embarks on a confession of Orthodox faith, recapitulating the doctrines formulated by the oecumenical councils.[550] For the purpose of the present study it is not only the references by the homilist to the Incarnation that are of interest, but also the specific stress on the body and on nuptial imagery.[551] In the third homily on the Dormition the tomb of the Virgin is compared with a nuptial chamber from which Mary rises towards the celestial chambers. Mary is also likened to a nuptial chamber within which the divine Incarnation took place. The homilist says that the Virgin, full of light, reigns with her son, leaving to us her tomb as a nuptial chamber.[552] Writing on the same theme, he links the Virgin first to the Incarnation and then most importantly to the Passion through which the regeneration of mankind is achieved.[553]

Nazianzen's statement "what he did not assume he did not save" acquires in the theology of John of Damascus. See Gregory Nazianzen *Epistle* 101 and above, chapter II.

[548] John of Damascus, *On the Dormition* I, 1.8-13, p. 483, "Justly it was said of you that you are the city of God..."

[549] *Ibid,* 3.6-7, p. 485, ... *ᾧ ἀτενίσαι οὐκ ἔσθενε ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ δια σοῦ κατοπτρίζεται.*

[550] *Ibid,* 3.15-55, pp. 485-487.

[551] See for example, John of Damascus, *On the Nativity,* 3.10-14, p. 171. See also *Nat.* 7.25-33, p. 177; *On the Dormition* II, 14.26-27, p. 532.

[552] *On the Dormition* III, 2.20-24, p. 550.

[553] *On the Dormition* II, 10.14-19, pp. 527-528 where the author draws material from the Song of Songs (4:7). The regeneration of mankind is compared with the creation of the world. For other references to the Song of Songs see *On the Dormition* I, 10.36-38, p. 496; 11.5-10, p. 496.

The individual features of the Virgin are praised for their participation in the apprehension of the divine: "Eyes seeing the eternal and unapproachable light, [eyes] always turned towards the Lord. Ears that hear the divine word and rejoice in the lyre of the Spirit, that through them entered the Word in order to be incarnated. Nostrils enchanted by the fragrance of the myrrh of the bridegroom, who is the divine ointment pouring forth from its own will and anointing his human nature..." [554] The *ekphrasis* of the countenance of the Virgin relates the holiness of the person to the holiness of her body and her icon. In another passage John refers to the Virgin as a "divine living statue," a phrase that may be considered as a defence against the charge of idolatry directed against the Iconophiles.[555] John of Damascus answers the same charge, asserting that the Virgin is not the pagan mother of the gods and that she has no other children like the pagan mothers, but the Mother of God who bore the Word of God without the seed of a man, and whose Dormition testifies to her perfect humanity.[556] The author also emphasizes the veneration of the *body* of the Virgin by the apostles at her Dormition and the way in which it performs miracles by healing illness and

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[554] *On the Nativity,* 9.34 ff., p. 179.

[555] *On the Nativity,* 9.20, p. 179, *Ὢ θεῖον ἔμψυχον ἄγαλμα, ἐφ'ᾧ ὁ δημιουργήσας ηὐφράνθη Θεός, ...* On the iconography of the Theotokos see A.Grabar, "Remarques sur l'iconographie byzantine de la Vierge," *L'art paléochrétienne et l'art byzantin,* IX, London, 1979.

[556] *On the Dormition* II, 15.1-35, pp. 532-534.

expelling demons, references that probably allude to the rejection by the Iconoclasts of the veneration of saints' relics.[557]

"Hail, Mary, all-sweet daughter of Anna; towards you I am drawn again by desire. How can I depict your noble walk? How your dress? How your graceful face?"[558] The concern about depiction, although referring to words rather than to an actual icon, reveals the author's preoccupation with the theology of icons and artistic representation. An interesting example is provided in the first homily on the Dormition in which the author mentions typological attributes of the Virgin, employing a vocabulary that belongs to the visual arts.[559] More specifically, the author employs composite words that point to the prefigurations of the Virgin in the Old Testament, such as προεζωγράφει, προεχάραξαν, προετύπωσεν. [560] On the basis of what has already been posited about the place of the Virgin in Iconoclasm, I would suggest that the recurring polemic against the Nestorians

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[557] *Ibid,* 11.8-12, p. 528. The author includes the story of the Jew who, having failed to pay due respect to the body of the Virgin, had his hands cut off. In the light of this miracle, his attitude changed and he venerated the relics of the Virgin who restored his hands to him; *On the Dormition* II, 13.3-20. See also Wortley, "Iconoclasm and Leipsanoclasm: Leo III, Constantine V and the Relics," 253-279.

[558] *On the Nativity,* 11.15-16, p.181.

[559] See for example *On the Dormition* I, 8.26-29, p. 492. In the second homily on the Dormition, (5.6-10, pp. 522-523) John conveys the emotion that fills him upon contemplating the body of the Virgin, fixing his attention upon the features of her face: "this holy and all-holy and God-worthy body I thought I was embracing with my own hands: eyes and lips and forehead, neck and cheeks..."

[560] For προεζωγράφει from προζωγραφέω meaning 'prefigure', see s.v. in Lampe, *PGL,*1148; for προχαράσσω (delineate in advance), *ibid,* 1198; for προτυπόω,(impress, pre-mould), *ibid,* 1190.

may be considered as directed against the Iconoclasts.[561] It is by no means unusual for Byzantine writers to accuse their opponents by attributing to them ideas -or rather heresies- propounded by 'heretics' who have already been denounced by the official Church. In this way, the views of the adversary were equated with heresy. John does not clarify whom he refutes (Nestorians or Iconoclasts) when he says: "Those who acknowledge you as Theotokos are blessed and those who deny you are cursed."[562] The homily on the Nativity concludes with the supplication of the author to the Virgin to accept the words of her sinful servant who, nevertheless, fervently desires and respects and considers her as the only hope of joy and protectress of his life.[563] In the epilogue emphasis is given to the role of the Virgin as a mediator between the author and Christ.[564] The conclusion of the three encomia on the Dormition, where the supplication to the Virgin is accompanied by a confession of faith, is similar: the veneration of the Virgin means the veneration of the Lord.[565]

In the second homily On the Dormition John asserts the strong relationship between Christ and the Mother of God whose "Dormition nobody would be able to praise adequately even if he had thousands of tongues and thousands of mouths."[566] The Virgin shares attributes of Christ as she is said to

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[561] *On the Nativity,* 3.10-12, p. 171; 4.15-17, p. 173.

[562] *Ibid,* 11.26-28, p. 182.

[563] *Ibid,* 12.1-3, p. 182.

[564] *Ibid,* 12.4-5, p. 182, *...και προς τον σον Υίον διαλλακτην και σωτηρίας ἀῤῥαβῶνα...*

[565] *On the Dormition* I, 14.6-14, pp. 499-500.

[566] In his effort to emphasize the importance of the mystery, the author employs a standard humility topos, reducing the impact of the homily in its opening lines insisting,

have been above all other creatures and able to grant mercy to those who venerate her.[567] The same text describes the Incarnation, laying emphasis on the paradoxical nature of the mystery; the image by which Christ is said to have compelled himself to enter the womb of the Virgin is characteristic of the paradox.[568] John refers to the story of the Dormition of Mary which, although not recorded in the Gospels, was already sanctioned by the tradition of the Church.[569] John inserts into an imaginary dialogue with the tomb of the Virgin, the story of the translation of the Marian relics from Jerusalem to Constantinople in the fifth century by the Augusta Pulcheria.[570]

It is also worth noting the lament for the Virgin that John of Damascus includes in his third homily on the Dormition. The lament is voiced by the author himself and not by a character in the narrative. Numerous ritual elements are encountered in this early example of a lament on the Dormition of the Virgin. Exclamation is used in order to express the distress of the homilist who represents

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for instance, that words cannot express what lies beyond words. See the homily *On the Dormition* II, 1.1-5, p. 516. The absolute accordance of opinion between the Virgin and Christ is emphasized in line 7.

[567] *On the Dormition* II, 1.15-17, p. 516.

[568] *Ibid*, 2.36-43, p. 519. See also 7.8-16, p. 525. In these passages the greatness of the Lord is exalted and in this way the paradoxical nature of the mystery is more amply manifested. An elaborate antithesis is created out of the contrast between the greatness of the creator and his Incarnation through one of his creatures.

[569] *Ibid*, 18.19 ff., p. 537 ff.

[570] *Ibid*, 18.5-68, pp. 536-539. For discussion see Voulet, (*op.cit.*, 168-169) and Jugie (*Mort et Assomption*, 166). Cf. Wenger (*L'Assomption de la Sainte Vierge*, 137) and Yeftits (*op.cit.*, 276).

his congregation.[571] All the people are shown glorifying the Virgin.[572] Her death, in which the whole of nature participates,[573] is presented as part of the fate of human beings but also as part of a divine plan; this is suggested by the repetition of the word ἔδει.[574] The author says that the Virgin had to die because what is made of the earth has to return to it in order to be translated to heaven and also because in this way the earth itself was sanctified, probably an allusion to the Incarnation. Her death marks the beginning of a second, new existence. The author employs features characteristic of the lament such as the appeal to people to join in the lament, and uses the imperative in imitation of the exhortations of the mourner.[575] The author draws a close parallel between Christ surrendering his spirit to the Father and the Virgin surrendering to the Son.[576]

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[571] *On the Dormition* III, 3.19-20, p. 551, *Βαβαί, βαβαί. Τέθνηκεν ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς, ἡ τοῦ Κυρίου μου μήτηρ...*

[572] *Ibid*, 3.9-12, p. 551.

[573] *On the Dormition* I, 10.25-28, p. 495. The participation of nature in the Dormition of the Virgin recalls to mind the Crucifixion at which nature recognises her own Lord and laments him. Another link between the Dormition and the Crucifixion is encountered in the second homily on the Dormition, 14.23-31, pp. 531-532. Here the author attests to the presence of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross and draws an extremely interesting contrast between the painless childbirth and the pain that the Virgin experienced at the Crucifixion when she was pierced by the sword of grief. See the treatment of the same image by the ninth-century writer George of Nicomedia in his homily on Good Friday; discussion below in chapter V.

[574] *On the Dormition* III, 3.20-25, p. 551.

[575] *Ibid*, 4.21-22, p. 552, *Θυγατέρες Ἱερουσαλήμ, ὀπίσω τῆς βασιλίδος ἀκολουθήσατε...* and 24-34, 552-553, *Κάτιθι, κάτιθι, δέσποτα... δέξαι... φώνησον... ἐλθὲ... δεῦρο... ἄπιθι... τελεύτα... παράθου... ἀπόδος... ἄρατε...*

[576] *Ibid*, 4.24-26, p. 552.

In his Marian homilies John of Damascus dwells on traditional themes, such as the virginity of Mary, and elaborates typological references that originated in the second century. His treatment of the Virgin, while reiterating tradition, is novel in that John portrays Mary as a mother who should be honoured beyond all creatures yet remain deeply human.

Cosmas Maiouma (c. 675-752)

Cosmas of Maiouma (c. 674/6-752/4), perhaps the adopted brother of John of Damascus,[577] was an extremely prolific writer whose hymns were soon included in the liturgical books of the Church.[578] His compositions have often

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[577] The scholarly debate about the identity of the most influential hymnographer after Romanos the Melode is reviewed and discussed in the monograph by Th. Detorakis, *Κοσμᾶς ὁ Μελωδός, Βίος καί Ἔργο,* Analecta Vlatadon 28, Thessaloniki 1979, (henceforth cited as *Cosmas Melodos*). For the origin of Cosmas see Detorakis, *op.cit.*, 84-85, for his dates, 85-90 and for his adoption by the father of John of Damascus, 90-91. Detorakis' study has been criticised by scholars for its reliance on hagiographical sources dating to the tenth century. See A. Kazhdan, "Kosmas of Jerusalem: a More Critical Approach to his Biography," *BZ* 82,1989, 122-132 and esp. 122-126 and *n.* 37 on p.125 (repr. in A. Kazhdan, *Authors and Texts in Byzantium,* London, 1993, X). Kazhdan demonstrates the way in which references to Cosmas by post-Iconoclastic writers were modified in order to fit the model of an Iconophile saint and hymnographer. Kazhdan (*op. cit.,* 128-132) also suggests that the profile of Cosmas the Melode was invested with qualities of the teacher of John of Damascus and concludes that the triangle Cosmas, John, and John's teacher also named Cosmas resembles to the triangle of the Barlaam romance and therefore assumes that Cosmas' biography as we know it is to a great extent a literary development.

[578] Detorakis, *Cosmas Melodos,* 111. The work of Cosmas is published in PG 98, cols. 400-524 (however, many of these hymns are spurious), and in Christ-Paranikas, AGCC, 161-204.

been confused with those by other hymnographers named Cosmas.[579] Kazhdan has expressed doubts about whether Cosmas was an Iconophile as it is often assumed on the grounds of the testimony of posterior sources.[580] The same author has also attempted to deduce Cosmas' ideological and political stance on the basis of a content analysis of his work.[581] Focusing on the recurrent references of Cosmas to the Cross Kazhdan assumes that we should not reject the possibility of Cosmas' having been an Iconoclast, or at least, not an ardent Iconophile.[582] The author does not fail to note that the Cross was praised by Iconoclasts and Iconophiles alike, but nonetheless suggests that in the case of Cosmas its frequent occurrence should shake our apprehension of Cosmas as an Iconophile.[583] Kazhdan compares also the use of the word 'icon' and its derivatives in Cosmas' poetry as well as in the works of John of Damascus and concludes that "Kosmas remained lukewarm to this hotly disputed problem of the eighth century...[his] system of images differed from that of John of Damascus."[584] To the question whether Cosmas was an Iconoclast Kazhdan answers that the mildest possible definition is 'neutral'; neutral to the major ideological problem of contemporary

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[579] Detorakis, *Cosmas Melodos,* 112-118; Kazhdan, "Kosmas of Jerusalem: a More Critical Approach to his Biography," 128-130. *Idem,* "Kosmas of Jerusalem: Can We Speak of his Political Views?" *Le Muséon* 103, 1990, 329-346 and esp. 329 (repr. in A. Kazhdan, *Authors and Texts in Byzantium,* London, 1993, XI).

[580] *Idem,* "Kosmas of Jerusalem: a More Critical Approach to his Biography," 122-123.

[581] *Idem,* "Kosmas of Jerusalem: Can We Speak of his Political Views?" 329-330.

[582] *Ibid,* 331-332.

[583] *Ibid,* 340-341. Note, however, Kazhdan's occasional use of arguments *ex silentio* as for example on pp. 339-340.

[584] *Ibid,* 342-343 and 346.

Byzantium. As far as his "enlisting in the Iconodulic cause," Kazhdan concludes that this "was probably the work of hagiographers of the tenth century."[585] Without attempting a re-appraisal of Kazhdan's work I would suggest that a content analysis focusing on the references of Cosmas to the Mother of God proves that the legend of the Iconophile Cosmas propounded by the hagiographers of the tenth century was not accidental. Even his references to the Cross show a distinct preoccupation with Christ's Incarnation and Passion.[586] Moreover, as we shall see below, Cosmas praises the Mother of God throughout his works. If we accept that the Virgin was a symbolic way employed by the Iconophiles to express their devotion to the cult of images then we may suggest that Kazhdan's content analysis has been too literal and that in his study he did not take into consideration the symbolic language of the hymnographical and homiletic corpus of the Iconoclastic period.

For the purpose of the present study we shall concentrate on the hymns Cosmas wrote in honour of the Mother of God. In the canon on the Nativity,[587] Cosmas lays emphasis on the miraculous Incarnation of the Word of God through the root of Jesse.[588] The typological imagery of the Virgin is explored in the

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[585] *Ibid,* 346.

[586] In the fourth canon the Cross is praised as the instrument of Christ's death that was foretold to the Virgin by Symeon (Christ-Paranikas, AGCC, p. 175, canon 4, verse 135-138) while in the seventh canon Cosmas praises the Cross upon which Christ suffered thus delivering mankind from Adam's original sin (*Ibid,* p.184, canon 7, verse 13). Discussion in Kazhdan, "Kosmas of Jerusalem: Ca We Speak of his Political Views?" 331.

[587] Cosmas Melodos, *On the Nativity,* Christ-Paranikas, AGCC, pp.165-169.

[588] *Ibid,* ode 4, verses 53-59.

canon on the Dormition[589] where Cosmas draws a parallel between the Nativity of Christ and the Dormition of the Virgin.[590] The tender, emotional tone that characterises works of this period is manifested in the canon of Cosmas in which he depicts the Virgin surrendering her spirit by raising the hands which have held the Lord.[591] In most of his poems Cosmas includes a strophe dedicated to the Mother of God, in which he praises the paradox of the Incarnation.[592] The *triodion* on Good Friday and the canon on Saturday in Holy Week are of particular interest. [593] The vocabulary and the imagery employed in these two hymns bear a strong resemblance to the paschal hymns and homilies of the eighth and ninth centuries.[594] In the Saturday canon, Cosmas places the lament for the dead Christ in the mouth of the women and exhorts his audience to lament with him who imitates their lament.[595] The compassion of nature is present in this hymn,[596] as well as the figure of Hades, depicted as embittered at the sight of a

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[589] *Ibid*, 180-183, ode 6, verses 93-100.

[590] *Ibid*, ode 6, verses 86-92.

[591] *Ibid*, ode 8, verses 146-150.

[592] See for example Cosmas Melodos, *Triodion on Monday of Holy Week,* Christ-Paranikas, 187-188, ode 8, verses 37-44. See also, Cosmas Melodos, *Diodion, Tuesday of Holy Week,* Christ-Paranikas, 188, ode 8, verses 21-24.

[593] Cosmas Melodos, *Triodion, Good Friday,* Christ-Paranikas, 194-196 and the *Canon on Saturday in Holy Week* , 196-201.

[594] See for example the antithesis between the Jews and Christ in the *Triodion on Good Friday,* ode 8, verses 47-50.

[595] Cosmas Melodos, *Saturday Canon,* Christ-Paranikas, 196-201 and esp. ode 1, verses 4-5.

[596] *Ibid,* ode 3, verses 21-30. See also ode 8, verses 142-145.

deified mortal.[597] The instruments of the Passion and death of Christ become the instruments of the death of Hades.[598] In the final ode of the canon Cosmas includes a very interesting dialogue between Christ who is already dead, and probably buried, and his mother. Christ consoles the Theotokos in four strophes assuring her that he will be resurrected and will glorify those who glorify her in faith and desire.[599] The promise of Christ is answered by the lament of the Virgin who says she is pierced by the sword of grief after beholding him as a breathless corpse.[600] The following strophes are spoken by Christ who asserts the defeat of Hades and the prospect of his resurrection.[601] Perhaps this is the first instance of a dialogue between the dead Christ and his mother. A similar dialogue between the Virgin and the dead Christ is to be found in the homily on Good Friday by George of Nicomedia in the ninth century.[602]

Theodore and Theophanes Graptos

The story of the two brothers, students of Michael Synkellos and ardent opponents of Iconoclasm, is perhaps the most famous one of the second period of

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[597] *Ibid* ode 4, verses 53-56.

[598] *Ibid* ode 7, verses 122-123, *Τέτρωται ᾅδης, ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ δεξάμενος τον τρωθέντα λόγχῃ τὴν πλευράν, ...*

[599] *Ibid*, ode 9, verses 166-170, "Do not weep for me mother, seeing in the tomb the son whom you conceived in your womb without seed; I shall rise again and be glorified and as God will I exalt unceasingly in glory those who glorify you in faith and desire (πόθω)."

[600] *Ibid*, ode 9, verses 171-175.

[601] *Ibid*, ode 9, verses 176-185.

[602] See below chapter V.

the controversy.[603] Theodore and Theophanes arrived in Constantinople as the period opened. They were exiled under Leo V and again under Theophilos for their Iconophile beliefs. It was Theophilos who in 836 allegedly ordered twelve iambic verses to be tattooed on the forehead of the two brothers.[604] Towards the end of his life Theophanes Graptos (c.778-845), who was well-known as a hymnographer,[605] was elected bishop of Nicaea.[606] Here we need only to draw attention to the hymn he wrote on the Annunciation.[607] In this hymn Theophanes draws upon the Marian literature of his century and introduces a dialogue between the Virgin and the Archangel, each alternately voicing one strophe. The Virgin is depicted as hesitant at the words of the angel who assures her that through her

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[603] The life of the two brothers is recorded in the *Vita* of Michael Synkellos. S. Vailhé, "Saint Michel le Syncelle et les deux frères Grapti, saint Théodore et saint Théophane," *Revue de l'Orient Chretien* 6, 1901, 313-332 and 610-642 and now M. Cunningham (ed.), *The Life of Michael the Synkellos,* with translation and commentary.

[604] For the iambic verses see S. Eustratiades, "Θεοφάνης ὁ Γραπτός," *Nea Sion* 31, 1936, 343 and the account of the events in the *Vita* of Michael the Synkellos (Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos,* 84-88 and the commentary in pp.156-158 and esp. *n.* 145 on p. 157 where the editor gives the relevant passages as cited in historiographical sources).

[605] For the works of Theophanes see Eustratiades, "Θεοφάνης ὁ Γραπτός," 339-344, 403-416, 467-478, 525-540, 666-673; *Nea Sion* 32, 1937, 81-96, 187-95, 252-259, 401-408, 569-579; *Nea Sion* 33, 1938, 317-322, 516-523, 618-623. For the writings of Theodore see Cunningham, *The Life of Michael the Synkellos,* 38-39. Unfortunately his paracletic canon in honour of the Theotokos that survives in a Sinaitic manuscript (cod. 1004 in V. Gardthausen, *Catalogus codicum graecorum sinaiticorum,* Oxford, 1886, 218) remains unedited.

[606] Eustratiades, "Θεοφάνης ὁ Γραπτός," *Nea Sion* 31, 405.

[607] Theophanes, *Canon on the Annunciation,* Christ-Paranikas, AGCC, 236-242.

God has decided to become incarnate.[608] Mary appears as the second Eve, conscious of the sin committed by her precursor and scared to believe the words of the angel who in turn asserts the truth of his news and his veneration of her.[609] The speech of the angel repeats and highlights the typological references to the Virgin.[610] The dialogue is vivid and dominated by the imagery of the Old Testament; the Virgin represents the accomplishment of the Law and thus her veneration becomes a praise of the economy of God.[611] Finally, Theophanes eloquently expresses the unification of the two natures of Christ in the womb of Mary by employing the imagery of light.[612]

Theodore the Stoudite

Theodore the Stoudite (759-826), whose doctrinal writings were briefly examined in the previous chapter with reference to the place of the Virgin in Iconoclasm, is the author of one homily on the Dormition of the Virgin.[613] The Virgin is described as a queen that the author beseeches to accept his poor speech,[614] as the mountain that God made his dwelling place, the lyre of the psalmist, the earthly heaven of incorruptibility, the God-lit moon, and the golden

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[608] *Ibid*, ode 1, verses 12-15.

[609] *Ibid*, ode 3, verses 22-27.

[610] *Ibid*, ode 4, verses 32-35. See also, ode 4, verses 42-43, ode 5, verses 52-53 and 62-63 etc.

[611] *Ibid*, ode 7, verses 90-95.

[612] *Ibid*, ode 7, verses 76-85.

[613] Theodore Stoudite, *In Dormitionem Deiparae,* cols.720 B- 729 B.

[614] *Ibid,* col. 720 C.

ark fashioned by God.[615] Most of the typological images referring to the Virgin are repeated by the author who aims to heighten the emotional involvement of his congregation through the use of poetic imagery and composite words.[616] Her role as mediator on behalf of mankind is particularly emphasized and the author stresses her perpetual presence and intercession despite her physical absence and death.[617] Being the Mother of God, the Virgin foretells her own death, which is related by means of an apostrophe in which she addresses her son asking him to deliver her soul.[618] The apostles who were present at her Dormition greet the mother of their Lord in a series of salutations that recall the *Akathistos* and recapitulate the typological imagery associated with the Virgin.[619]

Most of the homilists examined were both hymnographers and homilists and in their homilies they import elements from hymnography. The encomiastic character of the homilies does not rest on argumentation; moreover ethical imperatives do not occupy an important place in these texts. On the contrary, the panegyrics are constructed on the principles of hymnography. The appeal to emotion is particularly strong in most of the examples studied.

The sheer number of Marian homilies and hymns of the Iconoclastic period clearly reflects the growing devotion to the Virgin Mary who, in contrast

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[615] *Ibid,* col. 720 D-721A.

[616] *Ibid,* col. 720 C- 720 D. Note the use of composite words such as Χριστοανθης, ἱερόβλαστος, θεογεώργητος, ζωοσταγοῦς.

[617] *Ibid,* col. 721 A- 721C. See also 721 D, *κοιμηθεῖσα, φημί, ἀλλ'οὐκ ἀποθανοῦσα· μεταστᾶσα, ἀλλ'οὐ καταλιποῦσα ὑπερασπίζεσθαι τοῦ γένους...*

[618] *Ibid,* col. 724 A- 724 D.

[619] *Ibid,* cols. 725 B- 726 A.

(or rather in addition) to being the protecting figure of the sixth century, gradually becomes in these works the mother of Christ, more human and tender. This development can be considered as a response to the challenging debate of Iconoclasm.

The themes employed in the homilies of the Iconoclastic period are not new; they spring from the background of Marian literature. Special reference should be made to the typological images that permeate the homilies and the hymns of the Iconoclastic period. During the controversy this imagery, whose development we have already traced in the first and second chapters, becomes a standard part of encomiastic literary works. The core of the imagery, derived from the Old Testament, remains essentially the same; but its function is different, in that it serves a new need that seeks to be expressed. It is the worship and veneration of the Virgin and her ability to intercede for mankind that are at stake, and behind the repetition of the Old Testament imagery we may detect the need of the authors to invest the veneration of the Virgin with the halo of tradition. The study of the texts reveals that the main preoccupation of the authors was the correct understanding of the Incarnation and by implication of matter. The importance attached to the person of the Virgin and to her association with and share in the glory of Christ indicate the extent to which these aspects of Christian doctrine were intertwined in the minds of the Iconophiles. The emphasis on the Virgin in connexion with the Incarnation reveals also that the Iconophile arguments for the defence of images were based in a large part on the theology of the Incarnation. Finally, it should be noted that probably for similar reasons the

theme of the Crucifixion is magnified in conjunction with the greater prominence given to the person of the Virgin.

The Lamenting Virgin

The theme of the Crucifixion gained increasing significance for the definition of the Orthodox faith during the period from the late sixth to the eighth century. Anastasius Sinaites is of major interest to an understanding of the place of the Death of Christ in the process of defining Orthodox doctrine.[620] In her detailed study of Anastasius Sinaites in relation to the rise of the image of the Anastasis, Kartsonis asserts that "the twin employment of the illustration of the Crucifixion (in the manuscripts containing Anastasius' *Hodegos*) to combat first those who attacked the impassibility of the Logos, and second those who denied the perfect humanity of Christ, was thus founded on the theme of the Death of Christ. By using both sides of this coin, Sinaites proved first the immortality and impassibility of the Logos, and second the mortality and passibility of the flesh."[621] The development of the iconography of the Crucifixion clearly reflects the dogmatic preoccupations of Christian thinkers and through it the sacramental

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[620] See Kartsonis, *Anastasis,* 47 ff. wherein the author discusses the significance of the visual representation of the Crucifixion for the refutation by Anastasius Sinaites of the views of the Theopaschites and Monophysites; *eadem*, "The Emancipation of the Crucifixion," 153-187.

[621] Kartsonis, *Anastasis,* 52. To drive home his point Sinaites draws upon material representations (πραγματικαὶ παραστάσεις καὶ ἀντιῤῥήσεις, πράγματα, πραγματικα σχήματα καὶ ὑποδείγματα) and for the use of *Hodegos* in Iconoclastic florilegia see Kartsonis, *op.cit.*,58 ff.

theology and the evolution of the liturgy.[622] The assertion of the reality of Christ's Incarnation and Passion finds expression in canon 82 of the Trullan Synod (692) according to which Christ should henceforth not be represented in the symbolic form of the lamb.[623] During the Iconoclastic period there is a clear shift in the character of the paschal homilies. The comparison between the paschal homilies of previous centuries and those written during the Iconoclastic period discloses: a) a distinctly emotional tone that is characteristic of the whole of homiletic literature composed during the eighth and ninth centuries and b) a growing emphasis on the death and burial of Christ. Already in the seventh century Anastasius Sinaites had drawn attention to the Crucifixion in order to defend himself against the Theopaschites who asserted that when Christ died on the Cross it was only his body that suffered and not his soul, that is, it was vulnerable

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[622] Kartsonis, "The Emancipation of the Crucifixion," 166 ff.; G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* London 1945, repr. 1964, 145 ff.; Taft, *The Great Entrance.*

[623] Cf. Anastasius Sinaites, *Hodegos,* chapters 12 and 13 in K.H. Uthemann, *Anastasii Sinaitae Opera. Viae Dux,* Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 8, Turnhout, 1981. In the words of Kartsonis (*Anastasis,* 58-59), canon 82 specifically prescribed that Christ should be depicted as a man in memory of "*his life in the flesh, his Passion and his salutary death and the redemption which has thence accrued to the world.*" For the canon see Mansi, XI, col. 978. For canon 81 in which the theopaschite trisagion formula was anathematized see Kartsonis, "The Emancipation of the Crucifixion," 177-178. See also, J. Williams, "Use of Sources in the Canons of the council *in Trullo,*" *B* LXVI, 1996, 470-488 and esp. 477-479 where the author discusses the canons relevant to sacred images and objects. In the appendix 1, (*op.cit.,* 485) Williams demonstrates that canons 68, 73 and 82 do not refer to any previous council, synod, theologian or Biblical text.

humanity that encountered death and not impassible divinity.[624] The Passion of the Lord exemplified in the clearest possible way the reality and the fullness of the Incarnation on the basis of which the veneration of images was defended. The fact that incarnational theology was emphasized in the literature of the Iconoclastic period was pointed out with reference to the writings of the Iconophile authors examined above. Furthermore, the paschal homilies revealed the fundamental importance that the correct understanding of the Incarnation and of the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the Cross had for the soteriological theology of the Church.

The relationship between the cult of images, the Passion of the Lord, and the veneration of the Theotokos is suggested in the treatise by John of Damascus on the veneration of the holy icons written at the outset of the Iconoclastic period: "Who has ever seen death worshipped or suffering revered? Yet we worship the bodily death of my God and his saving suffering. We worship thine image. We worship all that is thine, thy ministers, thy friends, and above all thy mother, the Theotokos."[625] John of Damascus relates the suffering of Christ to the worship of icons, the Theotokos and the saints in a way that encapsulates the fundamental principles underlying the defence of icons and founded on incarnation theology. In the *Synodikon* of Orthodoxy the same thought is described in the following terms: "In the images, in fact, we may contemplate the suffering that our Lord endured for our sake, the Cross, the tomb, the death and the annihilation of

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[624] Uthemann, 12.3.16-18 and discussion in Kartsonis, *Anastasis,* 45-49.

[625] John of Damascus, *De Imaginibus* I.67, 168 (=PG 94, col. 1281D)

Hades..."[626] Furthermore, the association of the Virgin with matter is evident in the *Synodikon* where the objects on the altar are seen as prefigurations of the Virgin Mary, the holy vessel that would give birth to Christ.[627]

Iconoclasm marks a clear change in the understanding of the Passion and the burial of the Lord, a shift that certainly did not occur at a particular instance but took place over a period of time. If we compare, however, the earlier paschal homilies by Hesychius of Jerusalem, or Leontius of Constantinople[628] to the ones written by John of Damascus or Germanos I of Constantinople we see that the subject matter is treated in a distinctly different way.

For example, in his paschal homily the contemporary of Cyril of Alexandria, Hesychius of Jerusalem (d. after 451), asserts the unity of the divine and the human nature of Christ, emphasising the single subjectivity of the Lord. [629] The homilist elaborates the theme of the person of Jesus and the relationship between the two natures. It is interesting to note that he stresses the suffering of Christ and uses it as proof of his humanity while the miracles are evidence of his

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[626] J. Gouillard, "Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie. Édition et Commentaire," *TM* 2, 1967, 1-316. See esp., *op.cit.*, 47, *Ἐν γὰρ ταῖς εἰκόσιν ὁρῶμεν τὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τοῦ Δεσπότου πάθη, τὸν σταυρὸν, τὸν τάφον, τὸν Ἅδην νεκρούμενον καὶ σκυλευόμενον,...*

[627] Gouillard, "Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie," 49-51 (lines 76-81).

[628]See the edition by M. Aubineau, *Homélies Pascales (cinq homélies inédites),* [Hésychius de Jérusalem, Basile de Seleucie, Jean de Béryte, Pseudo-Chrysostome, Léonce de Constantinople], SC 187, Paris, 1972. For Leontius of Constantinople see P. Allen and C. Datema, *Leontius Presbyter of Constantinople, Fourteen Homilies,* Byzantina Australiensia 9, Brisbane, 1991, Homily VII, *On Good Friday* (CPG 7889), 87-94.

[629] *Τοῦ μακαρίου Ἡσυχίου, πρεσβυτέρου Ἱεροσολύμων, εἰς το ἅγιον πάσχα,* (henceforth *Paschal Homily* II), in Aubineau (ed.), *Homélies Pascales,* 122-126.

divinity. [630] By the same token, his death is seen as pointing to his humanity, his resurrection to his divinity.[631] In Hesychius' first homily on Easter, the soteriological aspect of the mystery is given explicit prominence.[632] The resurrection of the Lord, Hesychius writes, led also to the resurrection of Adam and the ascension of Christ to the throne of the Father, where he is called to sit on his right hand, symbolising the ascent of mankind to heaven.[633]

In his paschal homily Leontius of Constantinople[634] refers to the prophecies about the Passion and especially those concerning the resurrection of the Lord.[635] He employs the standard topos of anti-Jewish polemic asserting that the ancestor of the Jews was the devil.[636] He recounts the dramatic circumstances of the apparition of Christ to the Marys at the tomb and the noteworthy incidents associated with it.[637] Leontius refers also to the sacrament of baptism that was administered on Good Friday and exhorts the newly baptised to follow a Christian

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[630] Hesychius of Jerusalem, *Paschal Homily* II, 124.

[631] *Ibid*, 122.

[632] *Τοῦ μακαρίου Ἡσυχίου, πρεσβυτέρου Ἱεροσολύμων, εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πάσχα,* (henceforth *Paschal Homily* I), in Aubineau (ed.), *Homélies Pascales,* 62-68.

[633] Hesychius of Jerusalem, *Paschal Homily* I, 66-68.

[634] Leontius lived and composed his works in Constantinople in the sixth century. For the dates, identity and homiletic works of Leontius see the introduction by Michel Aubineau (*Homélies Pascales,* 341-344). The title of the homily reads: *Τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Λεοντίου πρεσβυτέρου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πάσχα* (henceforth cited as Leontius, *Paschal Homily*), in Aubineau (ed.), *Homélies Pascales,* 368-385.

[635] Leontius of Constantinople, *Paschal Homily,* 368 and 374-376 where the author refers to the prophecies of Sophonius (3:8), David (Ps. 15), and Isaiah (33:10).

[636] *Ibid* 372-374 and 376-378 (see 6.2-5, *Και τις ὁ πατηρ τῶν Ἰουδαίων; Ὁ διάβολος...*)

[637] *Ibid,* 370-372.

way of life.[638] Mary is mentioned briefly in a phrase in which Leontius says that "we no longer mourn Adam, but we glorify Christ; we do not blame Eve but we pronounce blessed the Virgin Mary."[639]

In these two examples of earlier paschal homilies we see that the treatment of the subject matter reflects the theological concerns of the day, namely the way in which humanity and divinity coexist in Christ, concerns that were conveniently adapted by the author to the basic features of the feast. In the course of the centuries there is an accumulation of standard themes that gradually become part of the confession of the true faith. New elements, however, are constantly being introduced into the treatment of particular subjects. In the case of the paschal homilies the introduction of the Virgin Mary, and especially of the Marian lament, may be considered as a consequence of the Iconoclastic controversy, especially since in the pre-Iconoclastic period there is practically no example of a paschal homily that mentions the Theotokos.

The emergence of the person of Mary in paschal homilies and in short poems, the *stavrotheotokia,* [640] that were incorporated into the services has to be understood against the background of the controversy. The re-emergence of the lament, after a silence that lasted almost two centuries since the *kontakia* of Romanos the Melode, may be seen as confirmation of the above proposition,

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[638] *Ibid,* 378-384.

[639] *Ibid,* 368.

[640] The *stavrotheotokia* are a particular sort of *theotokia,* being hymns dedicated to the Mother of God. In the *stavrotheotokia* the hymnographer elaborates the theme of Mary at the foot of the Cross. For examples and discussion see below.

given that the Virgin acquired unprecedented importance during Iconoclasm because of her role in the Incarnation. The lament of Mary illuminates the human parent of Christ, revealing unmistakably the assumption of matter and the possibility of its deification. Hence, the writers of the period place particular emphasis on the depiction of the Virgin as an earthly mother who gives birth to her son and God and buries him.[641] Sources for the lament of this period may have included the earlier hymns of the fifth and sixth centuries that were examined in the previous chapter. No doubt the style of homiletics of this period would have facilitated the introduction of hymnographical themes due to its encomiastic character and the use of prose rhythm. In contrast with the period following the restoration of icons in 843, in which there is a proliferation of Marian laments, homilies surviving from the Iconoclastic period are few in number. The earliest of the laments dating to the Iconoclastic period are ascribed to Germanos of Constantinople and Theodore the Stoudite.

Homilia in Sabbatum Sanctum

At this point I would like to draw attention to a text written by John of Damascus which does not contain a Marian lament as such but which illustrates the complicated interdependence of the themes mentioned above.[642] The homily on Holy Saturday clearly suggests that the Passion of the Lord was considered the most effective demonstration that the Incarnation was proof of God's love for

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[641] I. Kalavrezou, "When the Virgin became *Meter Theou*," *DOP* 44, 1990, 165-172.

[642] John of Damascus, *Homilia in Sabbatum Sanctum*, Kotter V, 121-146, (=PG 96, cols. 601-644 =*CPG* 8059).

mankind.[643] To a great extent, the homily revolves around the theme of the Incarnation and the repetition of the dogmatic formulations of previous centuries.[644] The suffering of Christ is the pretext for the homilist to accentuate the human qualities of Jesus within a framework of dynamic soteriology.[645] The parallel between the Nativity and the Entombment is drawn by John, who encourages his audience to share the Passion in order to share also the glory of the Messiah.[646]

In terms of imagery and vocabulary, the homily of John of Damascus can be seen as one of the homilies that served as a model for the composition of Marian laments of the ninth and tenth centuries.[647] The antithesis between past and present is absent since there is no mourning; however, the antithetical pattern is developed around the theme of Christology. The glory of God is contrasted with the horror of human death in numerous rhetorical images inspired by the

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[643] John of Damascus, *Homilia in Sabbatum Sanctum,* 2. 1-8.

[644] *Ibid,* 12-19.

[645] For the Chalcedonian symmetry between the human and the divine idioms of Christ and its reception and evolution, see K.H. Uthemann, "Christ's *Image* Versus Christology," *The Sixth Century: End or Beginning?,* P. Allen and E. Jeffreys (eds.), Byzantina Australiensia 10, Brisbane, 1996, 197-223 and esp. 200-201 and *n.*10. For the homily see John of Damascus, *Homilia in Sabbatum Sanctum,* 2-3.

[646] *Ibid,* 3.1-3, *Χριστος ἐν σταυρῷ· συνέλθωμεν, καὶ κοινωνοὶ τῶν παθημάτων, ἵνα καὶ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ γενώμεθα...Χριστὸς σπαργάνοις καὶ σινδόσι καθαραῖς ἐνειλίττεται...* The same exhortation to share the Passion and prepare for the Resurrection is repeated at the end of the homily, 34-36. John cites the ten virgins in order to transmit the ethical imperatives that characterize the Christian way of life, 35.24-41.

[647] See below, chapter V.

Psalms and the Scriptures.[648] The theme of the giver of life lying breathless is elaborated, and the defeat of Hades is described in vivid scenes full of dynamic action.[649] The homilist uses the present tense for the description of the Passion and the conquest of the Underworld.[650] Finally, it should be noted that nature, sympathising with the Passion of Christ, figures large in the imagery of this part of the homily.[651] As we have seen in this brief analysis of the homily on Saturday of Holy Week, John, though not mentioning to the Virgin Mary, dwells on the theme of the Incarnation and connects it with the Passion. In his homily on Good Friday he refers to Mary only in passing but stresses the paradox of her divine birth which became the cause of the salvation of the first virgin of paradise and of the whole human race.[652]

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[648] See for example, *Homilia in Sabbatum Sanctum,* 20-21. Reversing the saying of the Deuteronomy (II:23) according to which whoever hangs from the cross is cursed, John foreshadows the imagery that would be used in the *threnos* in later centuries: *Σήμερον κρεμᾶται ἐπι ξύλου ὁ ἐν ὕδασιν τὴν γῆν κρεμάσας...* Elaborating on Psalm 79, the homilist creates one of the most celebrated images in Passion literature, contrasting Christ seated upon the cherubim as God with him hanging from the Cross as a criminal. The homily of John reads: *Ὁ καθήμενος ἐπι τῶν Χερουβιμ ὡς Θεὸς, ὡς κριτος ἐπι σταυροῦ κρέμαται,...* (21.6-7).

[649] *Ibid,*22.1-2. For the destruction of Hades see 22.4-13.

[650] *Ibid,*22.17-24.

[651] For example, *ibid,*21.16-20, 22.25, 21.15-18.

[652] John of Damascus, *Homilia in sanctam parasceven et in Crucem,* PG 96, cols. 589-600. For references to the Virgin see col. 589 B.

In Dominici Corporis Sepulturam

The first instance of a Marian lament, probably originating in the Iconoclastic period, may be by Germanos I of Constantinople; the homily in which the lament occurs is entitled *On the Burial of the Divine Body of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*[653] Authorship, however, is often a challenging question in the domain of homiletics. However, if we accept the attribution to Germanos I, the text acquires a significance for the development of the lament in this particular period. But since the evidence is inconclusive, I shall study the text in an attempt to identify elements of the lament that might help both to date it and to attribute it correctly.

The homily begins with a piece of anti-Jewish polemic, a typical feature of homilies on the Crucifixion and the Burial of the Lord.[654] Themes that may point to an earlier date, unless Germanos II copied earlier examples, are the emphasis placed on the Incarnation as the assumption of human nature in its entirety and especially of human characteristics, such as toil, fatigue, prayer,

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[653]Germanos I, *Oratio in divini corporis Domini ac Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi sepulturam,* PG 98, cols. 243-290. The homily is considered as dubious by Geerard (*CPG*, vol. III, no. 8031, 510) who followed J. Darrouzès ("Germain II," *DSp* XXXIX-XL, Paris, 1965, 311) who followed the attribution of the text to Germanos II, also patriarch of Constantinople, by Lagopates, *op.cit.,* 126. Lagopates does not provide any evidence for his attribution of the homily to Germanos II, apart from the fact that it is mentioned under his name in the codex Monacensis 393 (I. Hardt, *Catalogus codd-mss. Bibliothecae R. Bavaricae,* 6 vols., 1806-1812, cod. 393, ff.69-87).

[654] *In Dominici Corporis Sepulturam,* cols.244-248 and 273f. See above, chapters I and II.

suffering, shedding of blood, and burial.[655] More revealing are the passages where I believe the author alludes to Iconoclasm. The phrase about the victory of Christ being transferred to the whole of the assumed nature is reminiscent of the famous quotation from Basil the Great,[656] reproduced by John of Damascus, about the honour of the icon being transferred to the prototype.[657] Another possible allusion to Iconoclasm is the mention of the uncircumscribability of Christ as a paradox of the Incarnation.[658] The epithet *ἀπερίγραπτος* was definitely in wide use at least as early as the first or second century A.D., but one of the first instances in which we encounter it in connexion with the Passion is in the homily by John of Damascus.[659] Furthermore, the faithful are described as *προσκυνηταί*, a term that may well allude to Iconoclasm, especially since it is followed by a reference to

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[655] *Ibid*, col. 256 B. See also, col. 261D.

[656] Basil the Great, *De Spiritu Sancto*, SC 17 *bis*,Paris, 1968, 18.45.

[657] *In Dominici Corporis Sepulturam*, col. 256A, *Ἡ δὲ νίκη τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρὸς ἅπασαν διαβαίνει τὴν φύσιν, ἧς αὐτὸς τὴν ἀπαρχὴν προσέλαβε...* See also *ibid*, col. 277 *...καὶ τῷ μνήμονι τοῦ νοὸς ἐνετίθει ἐπιζωγράφων ὡς παραμυθούμενος τὴν μητέρα,...* It is noteworthy that the word *ἐπιζωγράφων* means, according to Lampe (*PGL*, 523), to paint in outline. The only earlier record of the word is in Diadochus of Photike (*De Perfectione Spirituali*, J.E. Weis-Liebersdorf, (ed.), Teubner, 1912, chapter 84, line 14, p. 124). Use of the word should probably be taken to signify the text concerns Iconoclasm, especially since the word is not the only example of a vocabulary typical of the Iconoclastic period. For similar words see above.

[658] *Ibid*, col. 257 B, *Ὁ ἀπερίγραπτος, ἐπι γῆς ἀνθρώποις συναναστρέφεται ἄνθρωπος γεγονώς.*

[659] The first recorded use of the word is by Clement of Alexandria (c.150-215 A.D.). See s.v. in Lampe, *PGL*, 183. John of Damascus, *Homilia in Sabbatum Sanctum*, PG 96, cols. 601-644. See esp. col. 632A-B.

Abraham as the *ἀρχιζωγράφος* of the death and the burial of the Lord.[660] The sacrifice of Abraham is seen as a prefiguration of the Passion of the Lord.[661] Moreover, the text refers extensively to the Passion in relation to the natures of Christ, a theme that reveals the preoccupation of the writer with theopaschism.[662] The orator introduces the Virgin in order to explain the paradoxical nature of the mystery.[663]

The homily does not follow the sequence of the events prior to and after the Crucifixion. The first part is dedicated to an explanation of the Incarnation, whereas in the second part the lament of the Virgin is introduced in order to evoke an emotional response in the audience. In the third part the homily revolves around typological themes relative to the Passion of the Lord and concludes with a pastoral exhortation to the preacher's audience to follow the example of the philanthropy of Christ and to recognise the second person of the Trinity in every hungry, naked and destitute person they see before their door.[664] Even in the second part the style of the text is not that of a simple narration. The events are

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[660] *In Dominici Corporis Sepulturam,* col. 277 D-280 A, *καὶ ἡμεῖς οἱ τούτου προσκυνηταὶ ζωογονηθέντες ἀγαλλόμεθα,...Κατῆλθεν Ἀβραὰμ ὁ ἀρχιζωγράφος τῆς Χριστοῦ ταφῆς καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως.* For the use of the word *προσκυνηταὶ* see s.v. in Lampe, *PGL,* 1177.

[661] *Ibid,* col. 280 A, *Ἀμφότερα γὰρ ἐπὶ τῷ ἀπαλῷ παιδὶ προεχάραξεν. Ἐζητεῖτο τῆς μεγάλης βουλῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ την προτύπωσιν...* For the word *προτύπωσις* cf. Meliton of Sardis, *On the Pascha,* 39, *...ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ λαῷ προετυπώθη* and 40, *Ἐγένετο οὖν ὁ λαὸς τύπος προκεντήματος..*

[662] *In Dominici Corporis Sepulturam,* cols. 268 D-269 A.

[663] *Ibid,* col. 260 C-D, 265A.

[664] The second part occupies cols. 277 B-285 C and the epilogue cols. 285 C-289 B. Note especially col. 289 A.

related through the eyes of the lamenting Virgin who recapitulates the typological references to herself, Christ and his Passion.[665] In an emotionally charged monologue the Virgin addresses her dead son, wondering about the mystery that her eyes behold.[666] The address 'my child and my God' echoes the hymn of Romanos on *Mary at the Foot of the Cross.*[667] The prophecy of Symeon about the sword that would pierce Mary's heart is mentioned in the homily by Germanos who takes it a step further than Romanos, presenting Mary as demanding of Symeon an answer to her inquiry about the time of the Resurrection.[668] Another theme of the lament that is used in the homily is the appeal to the past and especially to the miracles of Jesus which are contrasted with the fate he suffers though himself the benefactor.[669] The people healed by Christ are asked by his mother to come and witness his miracles.[670] The appeal to nature that we encountered in this text is altered here to an appeal to the people to mourn with the mother.[671]

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[665] *Ibid,* col. 269 A-D with references to Psalms 37 and 103 and the prophecy of Isaiah 40, 12. *Ibid,* col. 272, in which the Virgin refers to herself as the ladder, the gold vessel of manna, the God-trodden mountain.

[666] *Ibid,* col. 269C-D.

[667] *Ibid,* col. 269C, *Τίς, ὦ παῖ, καὶ θεὸς, ἡ ὑψοποιος συγκατάβασις;;* Also col. 272D, *Ὦ Παῖ, δημιουργε τῆς Μητρος,* ... For Romanos, see *supra,* chapter II.

[668] *Ibid,* col. 272 C. See also chapter V for the treatment of the prophecy by George of Nicomedia in the second half of the ninth century.

[669] *Ibid,* col. 273 A-B.

[670] *Ibid,* col. 273 B.

[671] *Ibid,* col. 273 B.

Anti-Jewish polemic is used not only in the introduction of the homily but also in the lament of the Virgin.[672] The invective against the Jews is linked with the theme of the juxtaposition of past and present.[673] The antithesis concerns the honour with which the Jews welcomed Jesus in Jerusalem and the dishonour of his Crucifixion.[674] The Jews, however, are not the only source of bitterness for the Mother of God. More than the presence of enemies, it is the absence of friends that hurts Mary.[675] The account in the Gospel according to which the disciples forsook Jesus and fled (Mt. 26:56) becomes a source of inspiration for the homilist who has Mary lamenting the ingratitude of mankind. Among those disciples Peter is singled out being the person the Virgin addresses in her lament, first accusing him of fleeing and then encouraging him to come to his senses and not to despair, leaving Judas to hang himself from the tree.[676] In a rather dramatic and distinctly maternal way, she urges him to repent (confess), mourn and make haste so that the good thief would not be the first to gain the side of the Lord.[677] The lament contains no actual dialogue between the Virgin and Christ or Peter but the apostrophe introduced by the author creates an illusion of drama and gives the audience the impression of a dialogue. I believe this is the first attempt to

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[672] *Ibid,* col. 273 D.

[673] *Ibid,* col. 273 D.

[674] *Ibid,* col. 273 D.

[675] *Ibid,* col. 276 A, *Οἱ φίλοι καὶ οἱ πλησίον, ποῦ; Ποῦ εἰσιν οἱ χθες ὑπεραποθνήσκειν καυχώμενοι;*

[676] *Ibid,* col. 276 A-D, and esp. 276 D.

[677] *Ibid,* cols. 276 D-277 A, and esp. 276 D.

incorporate a Marian lament into a homily after the model established by Romanos the Melode.

The emphasis placed by the author on typology and incarnational theology, his vocabulary, the elaboration of the Passion that recalls the homily on Holy Saturday by John of Damascus, and the importance attached to the role of the Virgin in the Crucifixion all suggest that the author must have been Germanos I of Constantinople and not Germanos II.

Theodore the Stoudite, Oratio Catechetica in sanctum magnum Paschalis diem dominicum

The Mother of God and the Passion of the Lord are themes which attracted the attention of Theodore the Stoudite. At this point we shall concentrate on his paschal homily which, although catechetical in character, maintains most of the elements characteristic of the paschal homilies in the Iconoclastic period. Apart from the beginning of the homily where Theodore repeats a part of the paschal homily by John Chrysostom, the author ponders on the theme of the regeneration of mankind and its liberation from the tyranny of death.[678]

An antithetical pattern is woven around the Jews and the Lord who did not follow their example but, on the contrary, responded to it with the kindness befitting the Creator.[679] That is why we have to face the *threats* of malevolent

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[678] Theodore Stoudite, *In Sanctum Pascha,* PG 99, cols.709 A-720 B. See esp. col.713 A.

[679] *Ibid,* col. 713 B- 713 C.

people with courage, claims the orator.[680] Whether the author refers to the Iconoclastic controversy or whether he uses this passage as anti-Jewish invective is not clear. In any case, the two are so closely linked that no distinction can be made. Each of the misdeeds of the Jews is contrasted with a miracle of Jesus.[681] Within the framework of anti-Jewish invective Theodore relates the events before and during the Crucifixion, the humiliation of Christ in the court, his nailing to the Cross, the gall and the vinegar, the thorns, the piercing of his side etc., all of which are given a theological interpretation.[682] The Crucifixion of the Lord took place, says Theodore, so that the Jews would have no longer have an excuse for their lack of faith. By his Crucifixion the Lord expelled demons and healed original sin.[683] He had his side pierced for the redemption of the woman made from the side of Adam, because the Passion of the Lord did not bring salvation only to men but also to women.[684] And indeed, Adam would be saved by the childbirth of Mary who would bring forth a child without the intervention of a man.[685] The piercing of the side of Jesus is given so much importance because of its association with the mysteries of baptism and Holy Communion.[686] For the same reason Theodore makes much of the *προσκύνησις* of Jesus by the Jews who scorned him at the Crucifixion but who will bend their knee to him at the Last

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[680] *Ibid,* col. 716 A, *διὰ τοῦτο οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν γενναίως φέρειν τὰς τῶν πονηρῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπειλάς...*

[681] *Ibid,* col. 713 D.

[682] *Ibid,* cols. 716 A- 720 A.

[683] *Ibid,* col. 716 A.

[684] *Ibid,* col. 716 B.

[685] *Ibid,* col. 716 C.

Judgement like the rest of creation.[687] The role of nature, the only created thing to recognise its lord and creator, is highlighted.[688] Thus, the sun was hidden darkening the earth and the earth trembled not being able to sustain the sight of the crucified Lord.[689] The senseless earth is contrasted with the sensible beings, the Jews, who do not perceive what it is the creation tries to show them.[690]

In the paschal homily of Theodore we find a shift in style, which may be summarised as follows: the homily is imbued with an emotional character that was missing in previous centuries. In fact, this characteristic permeates the whole homiletic corpus of the Iconoclastic period and is not limited merely to paschal homilies. Apart from this emotional quality there is an element of dramatization which renders the events related more vivid and so heightens the emotional responses of the audience. The part played by nature also becomes much more obvious and dynamic as the contrast between the ingratitude of the Jews and the veneration of nature grows sharper. Finally, the Mother of God, more or less absent from the paschal homilies of the previous centuries, is included here as a silent figure which, however, may be considered a foretaste of the lamenting Virgin that was to appear in the homilies of the following centuries.

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[686] *Ibid,* col. 716 C.

[687] *Ibid,* col. 717 B.

[688] *Ibid,* col. 717 C, *...ἡ δὲ κτίσις οὐκ ἠγνόησε τον ἑαυτῆς Δεσπότην και Δημιουργον.*

[689] *Ibid,* col. 717 C.

[690] *Ibid,* col. 717 D.

Collections of hymns on the Mother of God

The short poems known as *stavrotheotokia* gradually became a separate sub-genre in the Iconoclastic period and as we will see that some of the most celebrated writers of the ninth century, like Joseph the Hymnographer and Leo the Wise, composed this sort of hymn. The *stavrotheotokia* can be considered a sub-division of the *theotokia*, that is, of the short hymns written in honour of the Virgin Mary. At this point a methodological clarification is necessary. Like all liturgical texts, both the *theotokia* and the *stavrotheotokia* cannot be either dated or attributed with any certainty. This is so because the hymns, just like icons, were not supposed to be signed by their authors, and authorship was not important since the hymns had a specifically devotional character. In many cases we are able only to attribute hymns to one author or another because he has recorded his name in the acrostic of the poem. This was the only kind of signature that hymnographers were allowed. In all other cases the researcher needs to rely on the manuscript tradition which is not always trustworthy. To these facts we should add that hymns were often 'edited' (in most cases shortened) by monks or choir-masters in order to serve the requirements of a particular liturgical setting. In the past scholars who have studied Byzantine hymnography have tried in vain to give a more or less concise picture of their subject and to establish the corpus of each hymnographer. As the numerous studies have proven this is not possible. One of the best scholars to have tackled the problem, Henrica Follieri, published the *Initia Hymnorum,* silently acknowledging this methodological difficulty.[691]

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[691] H. Follieri, *Initia Hymnorum Ecclesiae Graecae,* 5 vols., Vatican, 1960-1966.

The scope of the present study does not allow me to dedicate the space and time that a detailed study of the manuscripts containing *theotokia* and *stavrotheotokia* would require.

In his study of *megalynaria,* that is hymns in honour of the Crucifixion and Burial of the Lord, Theocharis Detorakis discusses the problem of dating and attribution and concludes that perhaps we should examine the first *triodia*, the first collections of hymns for Lent and Holy Week.[692] Detorakis argues that the date these hymns were introduced into the liturgical books of the Orthodox Church cannot be determined with accuracy. A study of the development of the Marian lament shows that in fact *megalynaria* that were incorporated into the services of the Orthodox Church after the eleventh century were nothing other than a compilation of themes and images which first appeared in fifth- and sixth-century hymnography further elaborated in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Just like their literary predecessors, *megalynaria* are characterised by vivid imagery and a distinctly emotional tone that expresses both an apophthegmatic definition of the Orthodox doctrine and a ritual expression of

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[692] Th. Detorakis, "Ἀνέκδοτα μεγαλυνάρια τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου," *EEBS* ΜΖ', 1987-1989, 221-246 and esp. 223. S.Eustratiades ("Ἡ ἀκολουθία τοῦ Μεγάλου Σαββάτου," *Nea Sion* 32, 1937, 16 ff. and *Nea Sion* 33, 1938, 19-28 and 370-377) has correctly pointed out that the *megalynaria* of the *Epitaphios* appeared in the eighth century, but he goes on to assert that they were not introduced into liturgical books before the fourteenth century. Detorakis objects to the latter point maintaining that it would be very strange if we did not find these troparia in mss. dating prior to the fourteenth century and suggests that researchers should set out to discover the first *triodia.*

grief over the Crucifixion.[693] As far as the *theotokia* and the *stavrotheotokia* are concerned we may propose that although their attribution is not certain, it is generally accepted that they were composed by authors of the Iconoclastic period, such as Andrew of Crete, Cosmas of Maiouma and Theodore the Stoudite. The *stavrotheotokia* refer specifically to the Virgin lamenting at the foot of the Cross and as far as we know Theodore is probably the writer to be credited with the writing of *theotokia* for the forty days of Lent.[694] The date of their introduction into the services of the Church is not known with any certainty. However, taking into consideration the date of their composition (in the eighth and ninth centuries) we may suggest that they were gradually introduced in the liturgical books of the Church after the restoration of icons in 843, at the time that the cult of the Virgin was given new impetus.[695] The *theotokia* and the *stavrotheotokia* were compiled and circulated in the form of distinct collections called the *Theotokarion.*[696] These books contained anthologies of hymns by Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus, Theodore the Stoudite, Joseph the Hymnographer, Photius of Constantinople,

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[693] It has to be noted, however, that grief is never devoid of joy; the grief for the Crucifixion is followed by the joy for the Resurrection. The combination of the two is the expression of *χαρμολύπη,* the bitter joy. See s.v. in Lampe, *PGL,* 1519 and John Climacus, *Scala Paradisi,* PG 88, col. 804B. Regarding homilies on the Passion see below.

[694] *Triodion Katanyktikon,* Athens, 1960, 8-9. The first to compose *stavrotheotokia* was Cosmas the Melode who wrote a hymn for each day of the Holy Week. Cosmas was followed by Theodore and Joseph from the monastery of Stoudion.

[695] See below, chapter V.

[696] S. Choraites, "Theotokarion," *MThHE,* vol. 6, cols. 314-316.

George of Nicomedia, the nun Thecla, John Mauropous, etc. in the eight tones.[697] Among them we recognise some of the most celebrated writers of Marian homilies and hymns of the Iconoclastic and post-Iconoclastic period. The character of these hymns is encomiastic and emphasis is laid on the virginal birth of Christ,[698] the typological images of the Virgin,[699] and on the supplication of the hymnographer who seeks her intercession for the salvation of his soul and of mankind. The appeal of the poet to the Virgin is a form that is to be found in all the hymns in these collections practically without exception.[700] The form of the canon ascribed to Theodore the Stoudite is to be noted: in the first *troparion* of each ode, the faithful supplicates the Mother of God; in the second *troparion* the Virgin supplicates Christ; in the third Christ answers the *deesis* of the Theotokos; and in the fourth the Virgin informs the believer of the answer given by Christ.[701] Perhaps the persistence of the theme of the Virgin as a mediator between God and

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[697] The first printed Theotokarion was compiled by the monk Nicodemus of Naxos who collected hymns on the Virgin Mary in the eight tones, surviving in Athonite manuscripts, G. Mousaios (ed.), *Στέφανος τῆς Ἀειπαρθένου ἤτοι Θεοτοκάριον. Νέον, ποικίλον καὶ ὡραιότατον ὀκτώηχον περιέχον ἑξηκονταδύο κανόνας προς τὴν Ὑπεραγίαν Θεοτόκον,* Constantinople, 1849 (henceforth cited as *Theotokarion*). Apparently, Mousaios published a revised version of the first printed *theotokarion* by Nicodemus the Hagioreites (Venice, 1796). These collections have only minor differences. For the present study I shall use the edition by Mousaios.

[698] See for example the canon by John of Damascus, *Theotokarion,* 23.

[699] Andrew of Crete, *Theotokarion,* 35. See also, Theodore the Stoudite, *Theotokarion,* 45.

[700] *Ibid,* 55. See also Theodore the Stoudite, *Theotokarion,* 44-45.

[701] Theodore the Stoudite, first canon in the first tone, *Theotokarion,* 1-4. See also, Choraites, "Theotokarion," col. 315.

man may be relevant to Iconoclasm and to the rejection of the intercessory prayers by Constantine V that we examined above. The earliest hymns included in the collection belong to Andrew of Crete and John of Damascus. At this point, it would be appropriate to stress the fact that all the hymns date to the period of the Iconoclastic controversy, especially to the eighth and ninth centuries.

Stavrotheotokia

According to the *Triodion,* the liturgical book containing the Lenten hymns, the *stavrotheotokia* were meant to be sung during Lent and especially on Wednesdays and Fridays, the days on which the Church commemorates the Passion of the Lord, although a *stavrotheotokion* is included in every service of Lent. Of all this rich material we shall concentrate on the hymns referring to the passion of the Lord witnessed by the Theotokos. The lament read in the Matins of Thursday in the second week of Lent clearly reveals the dramatic influence of Romanos, whose hymn *Mary at the Foot of the Cross* is simply paraphrased. The text of the *stavrotheotokion* below is taken from the *Triodion.*[702]

Romanos the Melode	*Stavrotheotokion*
Τὸν ἴδιον ἄρνα ἡ ἀμνὰς θεωροῦσα	Ἄρνα τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἡ Ἀμνάς, ποτε ὁρῶσα,
πρὸς σφαγὴν ἑλκόμενον ἠκολούθει ἡ Μαρία τρυχομένη	πρὸς σφαγην ἐπισπεύδοντα, προτίμως κατηκολούθει,
μεθ'ἑτέρων γυναικῶν ταῦτα βοῶσα·	ταῦτα βοῶσα αὐτῶ·
Ποῦ πορεύῃ, τέκνον; τίνος χάριν τὸν ταχὺν	Ποῦ πορεύη Τέκνον μου γλυκύτατον;

[702] *Triodion Katanyktikon,* 169. For an English translation see Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, *The Lenten Triodion,* London, 1977 (abbreviated as *LT*). Romanos the Melode, *Mary at the Foot of the Cross,*st. 1.

δρόμον τελέεις;	Χριστέ, τίνος χάριν, τον ταχυν δρόμον τοῦτον μακρόθυμε, τρέχεις ἀόκνως, Ἰησοῦ
μὴ ἕτερος γάμος πάλιν ἔσται ἐν Κανᾷ,	ποθεινότατε, ἀναμάρτητε, πολυέλεε Κύριε·
κἀκεῖ νυνὶ σπεύδεις, ἵν'ἐξ ὕδατος αὐτοῖς οἶνον ποιήσῃς;	
...	
δος μοι λόγον, Λόγε· μη σιγῶν παρέλθῃς με,	δός μοι λόγον τῇ δούλῃ σου, Υἱέ μου
ὁ ἁγνην τηρήσας με,	παμφίλτατε· μή με παρίδῃς, Οἰκτίρμον,
ὁ υἱὸς και θεος μου.	σιγῶν ἐμε την τεκοῦσάν σε, Θεε πανοικτίρμον, ὁ δωρούμενος τῷ Κόσμω τό μέγα ἔλεος.

This is not the case, however, with all the other hymns of the *Triodion* which possess a greater degree of originality. A typical formula of a *stavrotheotokion* is the one employed in the matins of Wednesday in the first week of Lent. The text reads:

> Beholding Thee, O Christ, stretched dead upon the Tree, Thy Virgin cried aloud with bitter tears: 'O my Son, what is this fearful mystery? How dost Thou who givest life eternal unto all, suffer willingly a shameful death upon the Cross?[703]
>
> (transl. *LT*)

The emphasis is on the dead body of Christ on the Cross, an image which links the Virgin with the Passion. We may suggest that after Romanos the Melode, the *stavrotheotokia* represent the first example of a Marian lament with powerful ritualistic elements. The imagery of the *stavrotheotokia* is drawn largely from the

[703] *Triodion Katanyktikon*, 100.

dead body of the Lord, the Cross, and the instruments of the Crucifixion (the nails, the lance that pierced Christ's side), while the Virgin Mary is described as a lamenting mother standing at the foot of the Cross and addressing her son and her God, bewildered by the awful sight her eyes behold. Her tears are bitter, her voice is raised to express the pain of the human mother that is not ignorant of the divine plan of economy but who, nonetheless, feels her heart torn apart as she beholds the body of Christ hanging from the Cross. In the next chapter we shall see how this setting and imagery is elaborated further in the homilies of George of Nicomedia and in the *planctus* of Joseph the Hymnographer and Leo the Wise. Two characteristic themes of the lament are encountered also in the *stavrotheotokia.* They are the ingratitude of the Jews and the compassion of nature. Each of these themes contributes in its own way to the heightening of emotion. The ingratitude of the Jews is the means by which the antithesis is struck between the malice of mankind and the sacrifice of the Word of God. On the one hand God's creation emphasizes the divine nature of Christ and his omnipotence, while on the other it serves a function similar to that of the choir of ancient Greek tragedies, sharing and making universal the lament of the mother.

Finally, it should be noted that it was Theodore the Stoudite, author of numerous hymns on Mary at the foot of the Cross, who hailed the restoration of icons in a work that includes verses specifically glorifying the Mother of God and asserting Iconophile devotion to the Virgin Mary.[704] The icon of the crucifixion of

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[704] Theodore Stoudite, *Canon in Erectione SS. Imaginum,* PG 99, cols. 1767-1780 and esp. 1772 D.

the Lord and the instruments of the Passion also have a prominent place in this triumphalist poem, whereas the Iconoclasts are clearly equated with the Jews who have crucified Christ.[705]

Conclusion

In conclusion we may say that the place of the Virgin in Iconoclasm was determined by a complex symbolic language formulated in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries. The Iconoclasts did not refute the veneration of the Mother of God, but there are indications of hostility directed against her cult which was closely associated with the cult of images. Veneration of the Virgin undoubtedly became the foremost manifestation of the Iconophile camp. The defenders of icons asserted that the Mother of God was not a pagan goddess, as implied by the Iconoclasts, but a "divine living statue"; in this phrase the Iconophiles both paid due honour to her beauty and refuted all possible charges levelled against her.[706]

One of the central issues of Iconoclasm was the debate about the worthiness of matter to depict the divine. The Iconophile thinkers opposed Iconoclasm with arguments that rested upon the fullness of the Incarnation. Part of their stock material, sanctioned by time and the blessing conferred by Ephesus and Chalcedon, was their insistence upon the veneration of the Virgin. This is why the Mother of God became so prominent a figure during the Iconoclastic

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[705] *Ibid,* PG 99, col. 1773 A.

[706] See above the discussion on the Marian homilies by John of Damascus.

controversy. It is also why the Iconophie writers produced a substantial Marian corpus. We may therefore assert that visual representation was justified on the grounds that the Incarnation was the 'gate' personified by the Mother of God. In this way we may perhaps explain why, even if the Iconoclasts had no intention of attacking Mary (although that does not mean that they did not attack her cult which they held to be so closely associated with the cult of images), the Mother of God became for various reasons the symbol of the Iconophile cause.

In particular, the Incarnation, expressed through the person of the Virgin, ensured a prominent place for the Passion of the Lord as one of the two most important events in Jesus' earthly life. The Passion complemented the divine plan and in this sense fitted into the scheme of incarnational theology as conceived by Athanasius the Great and later by Cyril of Alexandria. In the fifth century, Mary was the key to a correct understanding of the Incarnation. In the eighth and ninth centuries she was introduced into the Passion story in order to complete not only the analogy between the Nativity of Christ and his Crucifixion and Burial, but also the scheme of the divine *economy*. The second and now definitive rise of the lament in the Iconoclastic period can thus be explained in a manner that shows it to have been analogous to its rise in the fifth and sixth centuries. The Marian lament reflects on the one hand the growing cult of the Virgin Mary and on the other the increasing importance of the sacrifice of the incarnate Word of God. Moreover, it has to be remarked that the Virgin became a symbol of Orthodoxy, a symbol first used in the Nestorian controversy and readily adapted to Iconoclasm. In the next chapter we shall follow this development and the

symbolic use made of the Virgin in the second half of the ninth century once the Iconoclastic controversy had been resolved.

CHAPTER V

THE LAMENT OF THE VIRGIN AFTER THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw how great an importance was attached to the person of the Virgin during the Iconoclastic period. In the eighth and the first half of the ninth century the Mother of God not only received special attention in the literature produced within the Iconophile *milieu* but also was linked to the theme of the death of Christ. As I have already shown the reason underlying this development was the fundamental part played by Mary in the mystery of the Incarnation, on the basis of which the cult of images was defended by the Iconophiles. During the period following the Triumph of Orthodoxy the developments observed in the Iconoclastic period were consolidated and intensified. The Marian corpus of the Iconoclastic period was enriched by the homilies and hymns of the most influential figures of the second half of the ninth century, the Patriarch Photius of Constantinople, George of Nicomedia, Joseph the Hymnographer[707] and Leo the Wise.[708]

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[707] For Joseph the Hymnographer see Van de Vorst, "Note sur S. Joseph l'Hymnographe," *AB* 28, 1920, 148-54; E. Tomadakis (*Ἰωσήφ ὁ Ὑμνογράφος, Βίος καὶ Ἔργον,* Athens, 1971; reviewed by D. Stiernon, "La Vie et l'oeuvre de S. Joseph l'Hymnographe," *REB* 31, 1973, 243-266. See also A. Kazhdan et.al., "Joseph the Hymnographer," *ODB*, vol. II, 1074. Some of Joseph's hymns are published in J.B. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra spicilegium solesmensi parata,* vol. I, Paris, 1876, 381-399 and in Migne: Joseph the Hymnographer, *Mariale,* PG 105, cols. 984 A-1412 A.

The restoration of icons was marked by the renewed impetus given to the growth of the cult of the Virgin. In the period following 843 the Virgin emerged triumphant. Her crucial role in the Incarnation of the Word justified her role as mediator for the salvation of mankind. The first part of the chapter deals with the description of Mary as the triumphant Virgin of the Akathist hymn in the literature of the second half of the ninth century. The emotional character of writings on the Mother of God in the Iconoclastic period in the last half of the ninth century gave rise to the verbal image of the Virgin of Tenderness, thus prefiguring the iconographic development of post-Iconoclastic art. The earliest surviving examples of the iconographic type of the Virgin Eleousa, or the Virgin of Tenderness, date to the tenth century, but the literary model that inspired the iconographers may be observed in the homilies and hymns of the second half of the ninth century.[709] As we shall see in the later part of this chapter, the literary Virgin Eleousa stresses the human character of the Virgin that emerged in the literature of the Iconoclastic period and that forms the background against which

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[708] For Photius and George of Nicomedia see below. For the homilies of Leo the Wise see the recent survey by Th. Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI,* The Medieval Mediterranean, vol. 14, Leiden, 1997, 162-172.

[709] For the development of the iconography of the various types of the Virgin of Tenderness see G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Evangile,* Paris, 1916, 627; V. N. Lasareff, "Studies in the Iconography of the Virgin," *ArtB* 20, 1938, 26-65 and esp. 28-36 and A. Cutler, "The Cult of the Galaktotrophousa in Byzantium and Italy," *JÖB* 37, 1987, 335-350 and esp. 335-340.

the lament of Mary was to be elaborated by writers of the post-Iconoclastic period.[710]

Finally, this chapter deals with the lamenting Virgin as she appears in the homilies of Photius and George of Nicomedia. The theme of the lament in the literature of the post-Iconoclastic period is encountered in a far more developed form than its embryonic state during the Iconoclastic period. The lamenting Mother of God does not solely emphasize the death of Christ but also is linked to the catechetical function of Good Friday, the day on which catechumens were baptised. Hence, as we shall see in the homily on Good Friday by George of Nicomedia, a unique example of a Marian homily composed in the ninth century for Good Friday, the Mother of God appears as a model disciple who, at the foot of the Cross, undergoes conversion in her struggle to accept the divine mystery of the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of mankind.

The Authors of the Post-Iconoclastic Period

Many outstanding figures dominated the world of Constantinople in the period following 843. It is a difficult matter to resolve the interelationship of these figures. In the present study I do not attempt to address questions that are undoubtedly tempting to the researcher, such as the so-called literary circle of Patriarch Photius or the connexion between men of the ecclesiastical and political

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[710] H. Maguire ("The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art," *DOP* 31, 1977, 123-174) has skilfully demonstrated the way in which emotion is depicted in post-Iconoclastic art. This development in art was prefigured in the literature of the eighth and ninth centuries.

elite of Constantinople. Such works of Patriarch Photius as survive as well as his dynamic presence in the public affairs of his century have enabled scholars to assess the significance of his life and his contribution to the history of ninth-century Byzantium.[711] For the purpose of the present study Photius will be used as a point of reference in our endeavour to learn more about his contemporary George of Nicomedia of whom very little is known.

George of Nicomedia is often spoken of as a minor figure of the ninth century[712] and is remembered largely for his hymnographical and homiletic work, preserved in several manuscripts.[713] A close friend of the Patriarch Photius, who towers over the second half of the ninth century, George of Nicomedia died some time after 880; hence we may reasonably assume he was born in the first or second decade of the ninth century.[714] As we read in many titles of manuscripts he was a monk and rhetor and chartophylax of St Sophia before he was elevated

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[711] For Photius see F. Dvornik, *The Photian Schism,* Cambridge, 1948 and the numerous studies in his volume of collected articles, *Photian and Byzantine Ecclesiastical Studies,* London, 1974; P. Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism,* 105-235; W. Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival,* Stanford California, 1988, 373-378, 436-437 ; H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich,* Munich, 1959, 520-528. See also the articles by C. Mango ("The Liquidation of Iconoclasm and the Patriarch Photios") and P. Karlin-Hayter ("Gregory of Syracuse, Ignatios and Photios,") in Bryer and Herrin (eds.), *Iconoclasm,* 133-140 and 141-145 respectively.

[712] J. Darrouzès, 'Georges de Nicomédie', *DSp.,* 242.

[713] BHG, no. 131, 381,683, 1078, 1102, 1108, 1109g, 1111, 1125z, 1139, 1144k, 1152, 1156, 1364b, 1967, 1968; PG 100, cols. 1336-1529 and PG 28, cols. 973-1000.

[714] J. Darrouzès, 'Georges de Nicomédie', *DSp.,* 242.

to the rank of metropolitan of Nicomedia[715]. His friendship with Photius is attested in the correspondence of the patriarch.[716] In the twelve letters[717] addressed to George, the patriarch embarks on Pauline exegesis,[718] discusses issues of rhetoric, grammar[719] and theology[720] and refers to everyday matters, such as consoling him on the death of a mutual friend.[721] The tone of the correspondence, which varies in length and style depending on the occasion, betrays the close relationship between the two men.[722]

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[715] In the mss. containing the Homily on Good Friday he is referred to as ἐπίσκοπος (Ottob. gr 14, tenth century), ἀρχιεπίσκοπος (Par. gr 1505, twelfth century), ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Νικομηδείας ὁ ῥήτωρ (Vat. gr 1636, f. 201v, twelfth century), and μητροπολίτης (Vat. gr 564, f.54v, thirteenth century).

[716] Laourdas and Westerink (eds.), *Photius Epistulae et Amphilochia,* Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, 6 vols., Leipzig 1983-1988. Photius' epistles to George are to be found in volume II with the sole exception of epistles 24 and 126 that are contained in vol. I, pp. 75 and 164 respectively. Numbers refer to the number of the epistle in the Laourdas-Westerink edition and are followed by page number where necessary.

[717] Photius, Epistles 24, 126, 156, 164, 165, 166, 169, 199, 201, 216, 248, 277.

[718] *Idem*, Epistles 164, 165, 22-23 and 25-35 respectively, in which the patriarch comments on the Pauline epistle to the Romans. Matters of Pauline exegesis are also the subject of epistles 166, 35-43 and 216, 120-125.

[719] *Idem*, Epistle 156, 10-11.

[720] *Idem*, Epistle 248, 180-183, deals with the question of circumcision with respect to Christ.

[721] *Idem*, Epistle 201, 98-101. In another letter Photius consoles George who must have been unjustly accused by a certain Petronius and urges him to make good use of this false accusation for the benefit of his soul. See Photius, Epistle 199, 97.

[722] D. White-Stratoudaki, *Patriarch Photios of Constantinople,* Massachusetts, 1981, 77.

The Photian correspondence is the main biographical source for George of Nicomedia, for unfortunately the letters written by George have not survived. Hence, we can only guess as to their content from Photius' responses. It is probable that at the time of the restoration of icons in 843 George was a young man involved in the questions of the day. His Iconophile beliefs are apparent both in his work[723] and vouched for his friendship with Photius. There is evidence that George had been tonsured before Photius succeeded Ignatius to the patriarchal throne in 858. It is clear from one of the Photian epistles that he must have been among the monks and clerics whom Photius ordained and appointed to positions of authority when he became patriarch.[724] The background to Photius' succession had a dramatic effect upon the course of Byzantine ecclesiastical affairs in the ninth century and also upon the life of George of Nicomedia. In this short letter Photius expresses his admiration for George and his pleasure in the good words he had heard spoken of him.[725] He goes on to urge him to regard his former quiet way of life as inappropriate in the present circumstances and to carry out as best he can the duties recently entrusted to him.[726]

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[723] For the study of George's homilies see below.

[724] Photius, Epistle 24, 75. Westerink dates the letter to the period of the first patriarchate of Photius (859-867). His grounds for this dating is the change of the title of George of Nicomedia who prior to his consecration was referred to as chartophylax of St Sophia, whereas in the epistle 126 that Photius sent to George and Euschemon from his exile he addresses him as metropolitan of Nicomedia, see Ep. 126, p. 164, *Εὐσχήμονι καὶ Γεωργίῳ μητροπολίταις. ...ἀλλ'ὦ φίλοι καὶ τέκνα καὶ ἀδελφοί,*

[725] *Idem*, Epistle 24, 75.

[726] *Ibid*, 75.

The career of George testifies further to the friendship of the two men. After the synod of 869/70 George faced difficulties arising from his relationship with Photius. The synod had been summoned by the patriarch himself in Constantinople and its purpose was to make official the deposition of Patriarch Ignatius. The issue between Photius and Ignatius' supporters was the appointment of Gregory Asbestas whose case was still being discussed in Rome.[727] There is every reason to believe that the case of Asbestas was more a pretext than a cause for the dispute between Iconophiles. George of Nicomedia was among the clergy that supported Photius in the synod of 869. He must have been among the many clergy working at the Great Church. In his homilies as well as in the Photian correspondence there is no reference to a particular monastery to which George might have been attached and furthermore there is no mention of his spiritual father, unless it was Photius himself who played this role for George. The two men seem to have shared interests and to have belonged to the same camp or group. There is no indication what happened to George during the time of Photius' exile, though it is likely that he stayed at Constantinople and when Photius returned was to be found once again at his side. George's superior education is attested by his surviving works, but also by the letter Photius wrote to George in answer to a question about the meaning of a word the latter thought

[727] Although, it was obvious that Photius with his humanitarian interests and orientation could not possibly have held the same views as Ignatius, the clash between the two did not reflect differences over theological or other theoretical matters. It was more a question of a clash of personalities and groups and conflicting ambitions.

to be 'barbarian'.[728] Photius' reply suggests it concerned the subject of Greek mythology; Photius answers by juxtaposing mythology with the writings of the Apostles.[729] George's humanitarian interests are implied in another letter in which Photius compares George to Hippocrates and Galen, the two principal figures in medieval medicine.[730] To sum up, George of Nicomedia lived and preached in Constantinople during the second and third quarters of the ninth century; he was an ardent Iconophile and he belonged to the Photian camp.

Of all his voluminous work we shall concentrate on his Marian homilies that form the greater part of his published corpus.[731] Among them special attention will be given to his homily on Good Friday, a text that is central to the understanding of the development of Marian lament in the ninth century.[732] Nine out of the ten published homilies of George refer to feasts of the Virgin herself or of her parents and even the Passion homilies are dominated by the Mother of God.

Both authors just mentioned wrote extensively in honour of the Mother of God, though the homiletic corpus of Patriarch Photius was not so generally appreciated as the rest of his works. Manuscript tradition attests to the fact that

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[728] *Ibid,* 156, 11.

[729] *Ibid,* 277, 227-229.

[730] *Ibid,* 169, 45.

[731] George of Nicomedia, *Orations* I-IX, PG 100, cols.1335-1504.

[732] George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in illud: "Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus. et soror Matris ejus;" atque in sepulturam divini corporis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, sancta ac magna die Parasceves,* PG 100, cols. 1457-1489 (henceforth abbreviated as *Oratio in sepulturam Jesu Christi*).

Photius' homilies were not so widely copied as those by George of Nicomedia.[733] However, this should not be taken as indicative of the degree of recognition either of the homilies at the time of their delivery or of the preachers themselves. A plausible explanation is that the homilies of Photius did not conform to the standard required by the genre of homiletics, such as the extratemporal character of the general run of sermons. Indeed, Photius' homilies often refer to contemporary reality, a fact that could limit their use as readings on feast-days or other ecclesiastical occasions. The majority of the homilies written by him fall into the category of catechetical or occasional sermons. In searching for Marian homilies, one finds that, apart from the festal homilies Photius wrote in honour of the Mother of God, references to Mary occur in the majority of his surviving homilies. In the case of George of Nicomedia, the homilies in honour of Mary form the greater part of his published corpus.[734] Of these a prominent place will be accorded to his homily on Good Friday, a text that is of extreme importance for the development of Marian lament in the ninth century.[735]

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[733] Introduction by C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople,* Cambridge Mass., 1958, 8 and 24 -34. Cf. N. J. Tsironis, "Historicity and Poetry in Ninth-Century Homiletics: the Homilies of Patriarch Photius and George of Nicomedia," in P. Allen and M.B. Cunningham (eds.), *The Preacher and His Audience: Studies in Early Christian and Byzantine Homiletics,* Leiden, forthcoming.

[734] George of Nicomedia, *Orations* I-IX, PG 100, cols.1335-1504.

[735] *Idem, Oratio in sepulturam Jesu Christi,* cols. 1457-1489.

The Triumph of Orthodoxy

The restoration of icons by the empress Theodora and Patriarch Methodios in 843 is celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent, the Sunday of Orthodoxy. For the feast of Orthodoxy a special icon was devised: the feast-icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. As yet art-historians have not adequately explained the rarity of icons in honour of such an important feast of the Orthodox Church. The famous example in the British Museum (plate IV) dating from the fifteenth century, is divided into two registers.[736] The upper register is dominated by an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria whereas the central figures in the lower register hold an icon of Christ Emmanuel.[737] Another icon of Christ is in the hands of a nun who has been identified as St Theodosia of Constantinople.[738] Both icons of Christ depicted in the lower register are far smaller and do not balance the large image of the Virgin which is identified as the miraculous Constantinopolitan icon

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[736] Y. Petsopoulos, "The Triumph of Orthodoxy: the Restoration of Icons in 843," *East Christian Art,* London, 1987, 49-50 and fig. 43; R. Cormack, "Icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy," D. Buckton (ed.), *Byzantium. Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture,* London, 1994, 129-130 and fig. 140.

[737] For the identification of the figures in the lower register see Cormack, "Icon of the Triumph," 129-130. He identifies them as Theophanes and Theodore the Stoudite. For discussion of the famous Constantinopolitan icon of the Virgin Hodegetria and the development of the iconography of the Mother of God see G. Babic, "Les images byzantines et leurs degrés de signification: l'exemple de l'Hodigitria," *Byzance et les Images,* Paris, 1994, 189-222 and H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image Before the Era of Art,* transl. by E. Jephcott, Chicago and London, 1994, 73-77.

[738] St Theodosia was the woman who tried to save the icon of Christ on the Chalke Gate at the outbreak of Iconoclasm. See Cormack, "The Icon of the Triumph," 130.

of the Theotokos supposedly painted from life by St Luke.[739] The figure of the Theotokos is flanked by two winged deacons, probably signifying angels, while red and gold curtains are drawn aside revealing the icon from which hangs a similarly embroidered apron.[740] On the right side of the Virgin the inscription may be read as: ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΙΑ. This direct association of the Virgin with the restoration of icons demonstrates the manner in which the Virgin represented and embodied Iconophile arguments about and beliefs in the Incarnation and the worthiness of matter.[741] In this we glimpse the symbolic use of the Mother of God, that is her use as a synonym for the cult of icons.

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[739] For the importance of the icon as an insight into the religious procession that took place every Tuesday see Petsopoulos, "The Triumph of Orthodoxy," 49-50; Cormack, "The Icon of the Triumph," 130; N. Sevcenko, "Icons in the Liturgy," *DOP* 45, 1991, 45-57.

[740] Petsopoulos (*op.cit.*, 49) considers the figures to be symbolical representations of angels. Cormack (*op.cit.*, 130) seems to agree with the suggestion of Nancy Sevcenko (*op. cit.*, 48) who identified them as members of the brotherhood responsible for the weekly procession of the icon of the Hodegetria and its cult. There is no reason why all these interpretations cannot co-exist. Considering the evidence provided by Marian literature, it could be suggested that the ambiguous depiction of the figures represents a conscious effort on the part of the painter to equate the bearers of the icon with the people who maintain the cult of the Virgin Hodegetria, the deacons and the angels. See also in chapter IV the discussion of the Marian homilies of John of Damascus. Embroidered curtains and an apron encircle the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria in the iconographical composition of the Akathistos dating to the late 1340s. The Akathistos icon at Decani in Serbia depicts the clergy and the cantors glorifying the Constantinopolitan Hodegetria. See Babic, "Images et degrés de signification," 206, fig. 8.

[741] In another example of a feast-icon for the feast of Orthodoxy from the church of St George of the Greeks in Venice, St Stephen the Younger is portrayed in the lower

The relationship of the Virgin with the Crucifixion is hinted at the description of the procession of the icon of the Hodegetria by a Russian pilgrim who visited Constantinople in the late 1340s.[742] The account of the procession

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register holding an icon of the Virgin. Apart from being a saint of the Iconoclastic period who was martyred in the cause of the veneration of icons Stephen the Younger is also particularly associated with the Mother of God. For the *Vita* see M.-F. Auzépy, *La Vie d'Étienne le Jeune par Étienne le Diacre,* Hampshire, 1977 and for discussion with regard to the Mother of God see chapter III herein. The icon is signed by the iconographer Emmanuel Tzafournaris from Corfu and bears a sixteenth-century date. For discussion and identification of the figures see M. Chatzidakis, *Icônes de Saint Georges des Grecs,* Venice, 1962, 96 and fig. 63. The fact that the saint who faced martyrdom is portrayed holding an icon of the Virgin illustrates the association of the debate with the Mother of God. Another similar icon, also by Tzafournaris, and now in the Benaki Museum is published in A. Xyngopoulos, *Catalogue of the Collection of Eleni Stathatos,* Athens, 1951, fig. 6.

[742] The pilgrim named Stephen described the manner in which the icon seemed to direct its blindfolded bearers. G. Majeska, *Russian Travellers to Constantinople in the 14th and 15th Centuries,* Washington, 1984, 361-362. Many icons were in the possession of the monastery of Blachernai. Apart from the icon mentioned in the *Vita* of Stephen the Younger, there is another described in the *De Ceremoniis* (555.8-10). This particular icon decorated the imperial bath and depicted the Virgin from whose hands holy water flowed. For a relevant iconographic type of the Mother of God see Alice-Mary Talbot, "Epigrams of Manuel Philes on the Theotokos *tes Peges* and its Art," *DOP* 48 1994, 135-165. For the church built at the time of Justinian and dedicated to the Mother of God and St Anne and named *'tes Peges'* see, S. Bénay, "Le monastère de la Source à Constantinople," *EO* 3, 1899-1900, 223-228 and for the monastery and its history from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century see *ibidem,* 295-300. Nancy Sevcenko ("Virgin Blachernitissa," *ODB*, vol. III, 2170) mentions that one of the Blachernai icons was kept on the gospel side of the monastery church; it was covered by a veil that miraculously lifted without human aid every Friday evening. There is no mention of the miracle dating before the eleventh century. The fact that the miracle was taking place every Friday, the day on which the Crucifixion of the Lord is commemorated by the Church,

mentions that the icon was very large and richly ornamented; the bearer is standing upright, "and he stretches out his arms as if (being) crucified. It is terrible to see how it pushes him this way and that around the monastery enclosure, and how forcefully it turns him about, for he does not understand where the icon is taking him ... A marvelous sight: (it takes) seven or eight men to lay (the icon) on the shoulders of one man, and by God's will he walks as if unburdened" (transl. Majeska).[743] The cruciform body of the bearer of the icon connects the Mother of God directly with the Crucifixion. Also, the description of the pilgrim evinces the power of the Virgin while the ceremony itself attests to the widespread popularity of the Mother of God in Constantinople.

The Triumphal Virgin

In the homilies of the post-Iconoclastic period the Mother of God is portrayed as triumphant and victorious but also as the human mother of Jesus

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could suggest an underlying association of the Virgin Mary with the event and, of course, the development of her lament that was introduced into Byzantine literature during the Iconoclastic period and became a source of inspiration to iconographers. See also V. Grumel, "Le 'miracle habituel' de Notre-Dame des Blachernes à Constantinople," *EO* 30, 1931, 129-146. Belting (*Likeness and Presence,* 47-48) notes that "processions played an important role in the presentation techniques of venerated images. In such cult stagings the moving image took on a quasi-personal life; it functioned like an individual and thus could not be confused with all the other images."

[743] Majeska, *Russian Travellers to Constantinople,* 362; Petsopoulos (*op.cit.,* 50) notes an interesting illustration of the procession in an embroidery dated to the fifteenth century and in the collection of the Historical Museum of Moscow. The Hodegetria is seen on the shoulders of a single bearer who sways under the weight of the image, "his hands outstretched as though crucified."

who sometimes expresses her feelings in a typically human manner. These different aspects of Mary's portrait are not contradictory but complementary. Thus, the Virgin in this period is depicted with all the attributes accorded her by authors writing in previous centuries. For this reason, we may often encounter within a single homily the Virgin triumphant, human and lamenting. In this part of the chapter I shall concentrate on the Virgin victorious and triumphant as she appears in the literary sources of the second half of the ninth century. Photius refers to the Virgin in his famous homilies on the attack by the Rus.[744] In the two homilies that were delivered before and after the attack by the Rus, Photius refers to Mary as the protectress of the City whose name is evoked by him and his congregation in the face of danger.[745] Photius prays to the Virgin, as "our only hope and refuge," imploring her to save *her* city.[746] The intercession of the Theotokos covers both the temporal and the extratemporal realm, in other words salvation from the danger posed by the invaders and salvation of the souls of her people. In the second homily on the attack by the Rus, Photius gives an account of the siege characteristically saying that when every hope for its human defenders evaporated the City sought refuge in the divine.[747] On this occasion, the

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[744] B.Laourdas (ed.), *Photiou Homiliai,* Thessaloniki, 1959, 3 and 4, 29-39 and 40-52, respectively.

[745] For the background of Mary as protectress of the imperial city see chapter II. It has to be noted that in the post-Iconoclastic period the Virgin was also evoked by the caesar Bardas who, before leaving for the campaign in Crete in 866, prayed to the Mother of God at the monastery of *Hodegon* hoping to obtain her protection. See Theophanes Continuatus, I.IV, (Bonn), 204.

[746] Photius, *On the Attack of the Rus* I, 39.

[747] *Idem, On the Attack of the Rus* II, 40-52 and esp. 44.

people of the City kept an all night vigil, praying to God and the Theotokos.[748] Their prayers were answered at once, the wrath of God was appeased and the City was saved.[749] The answer to their supplication came when the people, desperate and knowing they could not expect help from anyone, turned to the Mother of God asking her to intercede for the salvation of the City to her Son.[750] To this end a procession in honour of the Mother of God was made in which the patriarch and all the people participated. In this account of the procession Photius refers not to the icon of the Virgin but to her robe whose miraculous power proved it to be truly the garment of the Virgin Mary.[751] The patriarch employs the occasion of the danger and the subsequent salvation of the City to exhort his audience to follow the ethical imperatives set forth in his address.[752] Photius urges his congregation to give thanks to the Mother of God and to confess their unconditional faith in her and their veneration of her who bore the Word of God.[753] She is portrayed as the means of the salvation of mankind and the one

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[748] *Ibid*, 45.

[749] *Ibid*, 40-52 and esp. 44. Photius explains the siege of the Rus in terms of the sins committed by the people, a feature that is typical of the Byzantine frame of mind and understanding of historical events.

[750] Note the parallel between the supplication to God (see above) and the supplication to his mother. *Ibid*, 45.

[751] *Ibid*, 45. For discussion of the function of icons and relics of the Virgin see Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 61-62.

[752] Photius, *On the Attack of the Rus* II, 46.

[753] *Ibid*, 51-52.

who keeps man safe from the turbulence of everyday life and whose intercession ensures man eternal life.[754]

Again, an encomiastic air pervades the two homilies the patriarch wrote on the Annunciation. Photius includes a dialogue between the Virgin and the Archangel, a feature that derives from the account in the Gospel according to St Luke (1:26-38) and which has already been adopted by homilists of earlier times.[755] The preacher appeals to the authority of the Old Testament in order to justify the choice of Mary as the Mother of God.[756] In a phrase intended to demonstrate the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of God, the homilist has the angel say that he cannot explain to the Virgin the mystery of the Annunciation for he is simply a servant and deacon of the godly orders.[757] The homily concludes with a series of 'hails' to the Mother of God, a peculiarity typical of homilies on the Annunciation which emphasizes Mary's exalted status even among the angelic orders, and with the supplication of the preacher to the Virgin to grant him, the emperor and his congregation the benefit of her intercession.[758]

George of Nicomedia portrays Mary in an exaggerated poetic and lyrical manner. In his homily on the Conception of the Virgin he refers to the Mother of

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[754] *Ibid*, 52.

[755] Photius, *On the Annunciation* I, 53-61.

[756] *Ibid*, 59.

[757] *Ibid*, 59. See also Photius, *op.cit.*, 60, "...the honoured virgin, the heavenly chamber, the holy mountain, the sealed fountain, kept for Him only who had sealed it" (Transl. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius*, 120).

[758] Photius, *On the Annunciation* I, 60-61 and discussion in Mango, *The Homilies of Photius*, 111-112.

God as the Queen of All, the door through which the Word became incarnate.[759] He describes the Virgin as the gift with which God recompensed Joachim and Anna for their virtues and emphasizes particularly their piety, their dedication to one another, their sacrificial love of God and their trust in Him.[760] In his homily on the Conception of St Anne, George of Nicomedia again describes the Virgin as the gift presented to the ancestors of God in return for their virtuous life, but this time the homilist stresses the role of the parents of the Virgin in the accomplishment of God's economy, illuminating each character separately.[761] The paradoxical birth of Mary from a sterile mother prefigures the paradox of the birth of Christ from a virgin mother.[762]

The homily by George of Nicomedia on the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple is contrived as an occasion for the faithful to participate in the splendour of the feast.[763] The birth of the Virgin is said to have brought about the

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[759] George of Nicomedia, *In oraculum conceptionis S.Deiparae,* PG 100, cols. 1336-1353 and esp. col. 1337 B, and col. 1337 D-1340 A.

[760] *Ibid,* col. 1340 A.

[761] George of Nicomedia, *Laudatio in conceptionem sanctae Annae, parentis sanctissimae Deiparae,* PG 100, cols. 1353B-1376C, and esp. 1356D-1376A.

[762] *Ibid,* col. 1356 A,... *Ἐκ στείρας, Παρθένος· ἐκ Παρθένου Θεὸς σωματικῶς ἀποτίκτεται, καὶ δι'ἀμφοτέρων νεουργία πραγματεύεται...* Henry Maguire in his recent work (*The Icons of their Bodies, Saints and their Images in Byzantium,* Princeton, New Jersey, 1996, 156-157) draws attention to the "comparison between the Nativity of the Virgin and the Nativity of Christ" in the homilies by George of Nicomedia.

[763] George of Nicomedia, *Encomium in sanctissimae Deiparae Repraesentationem in templo atque ut Deo consecrata sit juxta historiam,* PG 100, cols. 1401B-1420B and esp. 1401B-C.

healing of man's fallen nature.[764] Joachim and Anna are said to have brought into the world the accomplishment of prophecies.[765] The homilist asserts that the paradoxical birth of the Virgin reveals one of the qualities of God, in that God is not revealed when the laws of nature are operating, but, on the contrary, God reveals himself through wonder.[766] Renewal and rebirth are themes central to this homily and they are inextricably linked with the glorification of the Virgin.[767] The dedication of the Virgin to the Temple is the setting for the homilist to embark on a paean of the Virgin expressed in a succession of images and epithets of Mary.[768] As Joachim and Anna accompany the Virgin to the Temple angels surround them and the powers of the universe rejoice with them.[769] Jubilation over the dedication of the Virgin is such that even inanimate objects in the temple join in the celebration by the angels.[770] Mary is honoured in a lengthy recitation of attributes, metaphors and images.[771] The narrative is interwoven with the encomiastic display of the qualities of the Virgin. The homilist urges the Temple to open wide

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[764] George employs the well-known metaphor of Christ the physician; hence, the Virgin is referred to as the root of healing and is juxtaposed to Eve who became the root of the Fall. See, *Ibid*, col. 1405A-D.

[765] *Ibid,*col. 1408A.

[766] *Ibid,* col. 1409A-B.

[767] *Ibid,*, col. 1416B-C.

[768] *Ibid,*, col. 1417B-D.

[769] George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in sanctissimae Dei Genitricis Ingressum in templum,* PG 100, cols. 1420 B-1440 C and esp. col. 1421 C.

[770] *Ibid,* col. 1421 D.

[771] *Ibid,* col. 1424 A-1429 B, "the bright cloud...the source of light...the rational abode of the Word...the golden lamp...the life-giving altar...the all-holy abode...the gold incense...etc.

its doors and to receive as a bride the one from whom salvation was brought forth.[772] The accomplishment of the prophecies is realized at the moment when Mary enters the Temple.[773] For the early life of the Virgin George of Nicomedia draws material from apocryphal literature, especially the Protevangelium of James.[774] That Mary was receiving food from the angels provides the homilist with an illustration of her purity.[775]

The theme of the regeneration of mankind linked with the Mother of God is particularly prominent in this homily.[776] In the doxological epilogue the Virgin is described as the one who made the heavenly kingdom attainable by mankind, the one who helps mankind on its path to salvation, who is the invisible defensive wall of Christians and the most powerful weapon of kings by whom the enemies of Christendom are vanquished.[777] The imagery and the vocabulary employed remind us of the image of the Mother of God protectress of the City, but they also hint at the date of the particular homily since such expressions are not present in

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[772] *Ibid,* col. 1425 C-D.

[773] *Ibid,* col. 1425D- 1428A.

[774] See chapter II and Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha,* 1-50. The account of the angels feeding the Mother of God is a theme that was also introduced in the iconographic cycle of the Virgin's dedication to the temple. See George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in sanctissimae Dei Genitricis Ingressum in templum,* col. 1433D-1436A.

[775] *Ibid,* col. 1436 A.

[776] *Ibid,* col. 1437 C.

[777] *Ibid,* col. 1437C-D, *...σε Χριστιανῶν ἡ πληθυς, ὀχυρώτατον τεῖχος κεκτήμεθα· σε πιστοὶ βασιλεῖς κραταιον ὅπλον κατέχουσι· δια σοῦ τῶν πολεμίων τα θράση συντρίβουσι.*

any other homily by George of Nicomedia.[778] It is therefore likely that the homily was delivered following the attack of the Rus upon the City and its salvation which, as we noted in the homilies by Photius, was ascribed to the Virgin.[779] However, the Virgin-protectress clearly gives way to the Virgin-Mother on whose mediation Christians can count because of her divine motherhood.[780]

In the examples cited above the person of the Virgin is developed by drawing upon the typological images introduced during the first Christian centuries and further refined in the period preceding the restoration of icons. Nonetheless, Mary retains her attributes as protectress of Constantinople, the City which is saved once again in the ninth century thanks to her intercession. Thus, the human, maternal characteristics of Mary that pervade the literature of Iconoclastic and post-Iconoclastic literature do not supplant the traditional treatment of the Virgin; they are additional to her other qualities and occasionally, depending on the circumstances, are given a more prominent place.

The Virgin of Tenderness

In the previous chapter we saw that the literature of the Iconoclastic period was dominated by a distinctly emotional spirit and that the authors of the Marian corpus adopted the typology employed in previous centuries and adapted it to

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[778] See for example the vocabulary of the Akathistos reproduced in *Ibid,* col. 1440A, *...Σὺ Θεοτόκε... ἔχεις την δύναμιν ἀήττητον· ἔχεις τὸ κράτος ἀπροσμάχητον.*

[779] See above.

[780] *Ibid,* col. 1440A.

enrich their own imagery.[781] As a result, homilies of the Iconoclastic period are characterized by a particular emphasis on visual imagery which is combined with their emotional content. The conjunction of these two characteristics of homiletics of the Iconoclastic period is not a mere coincidence for as we have seen, they support the Iconophile argument for the cult of images that illustrate the human dimension of the incarnate God. Probably this is also the reason why the rhetorical device of *ekphrasis* was used extensively by authors of the Iconoclastic and post-Iconoclastic period.[782] By means of a rhetorical figure writers of the eighth and ninth centuries gave expression to an argument that formed part of the Iconophile case in defense of the Incarnation and the cult of images. Hence, emotion and emphasis on the visual imagery of the sermon are the characteristics that define the nature of eighth and ninth century homiletics.[783]

The failure of Iconoclasm in the ninth century gave a new impetus to the cult of the Virgin.[784] The first official work of art commissioned after the

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[781] Babic stresses the fact that Iconophile thinkers appealed to the faithful by addressing themselves to the psychological rather than the rational being. In the words of the author: "La pensée des grands théologiens byzantins dépasse le raisonnement logique, considéré comme très partiel, et s'addresse à l'être psychologique du fidèle, englobant l'homme tout entier et son univers, son imagination et ses sentiments. Décrivant un iconoclaste le patriarche Nicéphore disait avec mépris que celui-ci *a été privé de la lumière de la vérité, lui dont le savoir et l'imagination ne dépassent pas le monde visible*." See Babic, "Images et degrés de signification," 198.

[782] For *ekphrasis* see chapter I and discussion above.

[783] The eighth-century example of a believer whose eyes filled with tears as he prayed before an icon is recorded in an epistle of Theodore the Stoudite, PG 99, col. 500 A-B.

[784] R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold,* London, 1985, 142.

restoration of images in 843 was the mosaic of the Mother of God that was inaugurated in 867 and that still survives in the apse of St Sophia in Constantinople (plate V). The mosaic was inaugurated by Patriarch Photius of Constantinople on Saturday in Holy Week. The event is recorded in one of the patriarch's homilies.[785] The patriarch is one of the few Byzantine homilists who do not hesitate to refer to contemporary reality in a straightforward way.[786] Hence, his homiletic corpus in general and his homily on the Inauguration of the Mosaic of the Virgin in particular reveal a significant link between the Mother of God and contemporary reality. The sermon is especially interesting not only for the description of the mosaic that has become the subject of modern scholarship, but also for the association of the image of the Virgin with the victory over Iconoclasm.[787] The feast as a source of joy stands out for three reasons, says the patriarch: firstly for the incontestable power of piety, secondly for the eradication of unbelief and thirdly for the triumph it represents over those who ended their

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[785] Photius, *On the Inauguration of the Mosaic of the Virgin Mary,* in Laourdas, *Photiou Omiliai,* 164-172.

[786] This could also be the reason why his homiletic corpus has not been as popular as the rest of his literary work. For a comparison of Photius with his contemporary George of Nicomedia and the different nuances of style they employ in their homiletic writings see Tsironis, "Historicity and Poetry in Ninth-Century Homiletics," (forthcoming).

[787] On the apse mosaic of the Virgin in St Sophia see C. Mango, *The Mosaics of St. Sophia at Istanbul,* Dumbarton Oaks Studies VIII, Washington D.C., 1962, 80-82 and 94-95; *idem, Homilies of Photius,* 283-285; A.Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantin. Dossier archéologique,* Paris, 1957, 185; for the redecoration of other buildings of Constantinople from 843 to 867 see R.J.H. Jenkins and C. Mango, "The Date and Significance of the Tenth Homily of Photius," *DOP* 9-10, 1956, 125-140. R. Cormack

life in unfaith.[788] More particularly, Photius refers to the restoration and the veneration of icons by the imperial authority, and directly connects the icon of the Virgin with the Triumph of Orthodoxy.[789] The homilist speaks of the way in which the icon of the Virgin diverts the mind from everyday concerns to the divine love of the true faith.[790] However, the description of the icon by Photius does not correspond to the actual representation. The epithets bestowed upon to the Virgin in iconography are beyond number and to a great extent they are irrelevant to the type of the representation. For instance, we may often come across a Virgin of the Hodegetria type with the inscription 'Eleousa' or *vice versa* (plate VI).[791] In general, however, we may say that the Virgin Hodegetria refers to the iconographic type depicting the Mother of God holding Christ in her left or

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and E.J.W. Hawkins, "The Mosaics of Saint Sophia at Istanbul: The Rooms above the Southwest Vestibule and Ramp" *DOP* 31, 1977, 175-251.

[788] Photius, *On the Inauguration of the Mosaic of the Virgin,* 164 translated by Mango, *Homilies of Photius,* 286-296.

[789] *Ibid,* 166-167.

[790] *Ibid,* 167.

[791] Petsopoulos, *East Christian Art,* 28. Gold repoussé work of the Byzantine period is very rare, a fact that makes the dating problematic. However, see the discussion by Petsopoulos. This reliquary diptych pendant is of ninth-century workmanship and the epithets inscribed on it are uncommon. The right panel shows an Hodegetria with the epithet *Avasiotisiotissa* while the left shows the Virgin with Christ in a circular medallion exactly over her heart. The epithet is *Kardiobastazousa,* 'she who holds Christ over her heart'. The first epithet seems particularly problematic; Cyril Mango pointed to the existence of the monastery of Avassos in Epirus, but the repetition of the syllables *sioti* remains to be explained. I would tentatively suggest that the artist duplicates them for reasons of spatial symmetry between the two inscriptions each of which consists of seven syllables and almost the same number of letters.

right arm while with her free hand she points to him; hence, the epithet *Hodegetria*, the one who *guides* the beholder towards the Saviour. Contrastingly, the Virgin Eleousa is a more emotional iconographic type of the Mother of God and portrays holding the child Christ close to her and laying her cheek on his head in a gesture of intimacy.

The apse mosaic of St Sophia depicts the Mother of God Enthroned looking the viewer in the eyes as she holds Christ Emmanuel in her arms, an iconographical type of the Virgin common in the pre-Iconoclastic period and conventionally called 'Hodegetria'. Photius, however, gives the following description:

> "A virgin mother, with both a virgin's and a mother's gaze, dividing in indivisible form her temperament between both capacities, yet belittling neither by its incompleteness. The art of painting, which is a reflection of inspiration from above, has set up such an exact imitation of her nature. For, as it were, with the love from her womb, she turns her eyes on the begotten child with feeling, yet assumes the expression of a detached and imperturbable mood at the passionless and wondrous nature of her offspring, and composes her gaze accordingly. You might think her not incapable of speaking ... To such an extent have the lips been made flesh by colours, that they appear merely to be pressed together and stilled as in the mysteries, yet their silence is not at all inert neither is the fairness of her form derivatory, but rather it is the real archetype... But before our eyes stands motionless the Virgin carrying the Creator in her arms as an

infant, depicted in painting as she is in writing and visions, an interceder for our salvation."[792] (transl. C.Mango)

The Virgin described in the homily of Photius would correspond to a representation of the Virgin Eleousa or the Virgin of Tenderness.[793] The apse mosaic of St Sophia portrays a Virgin of the Hodegetria type without an inscription.[794] The discrepancy between Photius' text and the apse image was explained by James and Webb, on the basis of a broader interpretation of the rhetorical *ekphrasis* in homiletics. The patriarch goes beyond the realistic

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[792] Mango, *The Homilies of Photius,* 290, 295; Photius, *On the Inauguration of the Mosaic of the Virgin,* (in Laourdas), 167, 171.

[793] The epithets ascribed to the two basic iconographic types of the Virgin, the Hodegetria and the Virgin of Tenderness, vary greatly and there is no consistency in the way they are used. It is not rare to find a Hodegetria icon accompanied by an inscription of the Mother of God of Tenderness, or the reverse. It is generally accepted, however, that this iconographical type, alternatively called Eleousa or Glykophilousa (in post-Byzantine times), was widespread in the post-Iconoclastic period. M.Vasilaki, "Glykophilousa," forthcoming. Nancy Sevcenko ("Virgin Eleousa," *ODB*, vol. III, 2171) asserts that the epithet 'eleousa' into use in the eighth and ninth centuries and that it was "attached with rather little consistency to a wide variety of her images."

[794] In a forthcoming article on the mosaic of St Sophia, Petsopoulos suggests that the gold background, which has been restored, once bore a horizontal inscription of such proportions that it counterbalanced the vertical figure of the Mother of God and so imparted a perfect harmony to the mosaic within the apse. This inscription might have read 'Eleousa' and so it is likely that Photius in his homily was describing not merely the 'spiritual significance' of the image, as is suggested by L. James and R. Webb ("*To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places:* Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium," *Art History* 14, 1991, 1-17 and esp. 14), but also an iconographic type that was emerging at this very time. I would like to thank Mr Petsopoulos for discussing his paper with me before its publication.

description of the image and expresses its spiritual significance. *Ekphrasis* is what the beholder might read rather than an actual description that would add nothing for the believer who can see the work itself. James and Webb write: "Photius seeks to interpret and flesh out the image ... He aims to convey emotion, as *ekphrasis* is supposed to do, and to say something about the nature of the image in a spiritual context. The mosaic reveals the nature, the being, the *physis,* of the Virgin".[795] According to this view, the homily of Photius describes the spiritual significance of the figure of the Mother of God holding Christ whereas the image depicts a type that was already widely acclaimed in the pre-Iconoclastic era. In this sense, the icon of the Virgin served most aptly the celebration of the restoration of icons since it restored the image of the Virgin depicted in a form familiar to the people.

This interpretation finds further support in the role of the Mother of God in Iconoclasm. In view of the symbolic use of concepts of the Virgin Mary during the controversy, it seems only natural that the patriarch should commission a mosaic of the Virgin (and not of Christ) in order to celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy. As for the description of the mosaic, it corresponds exactly with the emotional character with which the Mother of God was invested in the literature of the eighth and ninth centuries; furthermore it expressed also her character as

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[795] James and Webb, "Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium," 13. For the relationship between text and image see also H. Maguire, *Image and Imagination: the Byzantine Epigram as Evidence for Viewer Response,* Toronto, 1996 and L. Brubaker, "Perception and Conception: Art, Theory and Culture in Ninth-Century Byzantium," *Word and Image* 5, 1989, 19-31 and esp. 23-25.

the compassionate mother the Virgin Eleousa who mediates between mankind and her son for the salvation of the former.[796]

The nature of the relationship between text and image and of the influence of the one upon the other was treated with by Henry Maguire who argued persuasively that rhetoric played a significant part in pictorial representation in Byzantium.[797] Models first established in homiletics were adopted by artists and eventually were incorporated into iconography.[798] Antithesis, hyperbole, and most importantly the lament, the expression of grief, found a place in wall paintings, mosaics and portable icons in conformity with the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council: "that which the narrative declares in writing is the same as that which the icon portrays visually".[799] In this context it might be suggested that the emotional Mary of the literature of the Iconoclastic period served as a model for the iconographic type of the Virgin of Tenderness.

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[796] Perhaps the earliest example of the iconographic type of the Virgin Eleousa dates to the tenth century and was studied by N.Thierry (*Zograf* 10, 1979, 59-70). For the relationship between the Virgin Eleousa and the liturgy of the Passion, in which special emphasis was placed on the love of the Virgin for Christ both as an infant and at his death, see Pallas, *Passion und Bestattung,* 169-173. See also, Lasareff, "Studies in the Iconography of the Virgin," 36-42 and A. Grabar, "Les images de la Vierge de la Tendresse," *Zograf* 6, 1975, 25-30.

[797] H. Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium,* Princeton 1981, *passim.*

[798] R. Cormack, "Painting After Iconoclasm," A. Bryer and J. Herrin (eds.), *Iconoclasm,* Birmingham, 1977, 147-163 and esp. 151-153 in which the author draws attention to the use of the homily on Good Friday by George of Nicomedia as a model for iconography.

[799] Mansi XIII, 232C.

The human qualities of the Virgin are also reflected in the description of her as a bride, a designation that points to her role in the mystery of the Incarnation and the 'marriage' of humanity and divinity in Christ. In Photius' second homily on the Annunciation the Virgin is depicted as a bride betrothed to Christ.[800] Nuptial imagery dominates the greater part of the homily whose conclusion is taken up with a series of ethical imperatives describing the gifts the faithful should bring to the Virgin on the occasion of her betrothal.[801] She is the bride presented to Christ not by any particular city or nation, but by the whole world.[802] The Virgin is said to have been so totally captivated by divine love that her soul became a temple of mildness.[803]

In the third of George of Nicomedia's homilies, on the Conception and Nativity of the Mother of God, the Virgin is referred to as the *innupta sposa,* the 'unwedded bride' whose birth brought about the renewal of our nature.[804] Nature is brought in at this point in order to express the universal joy felt at the birth of

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[800] Photius, *On the Annunciation* II, 74-82 and esp. 76, "For today the Virgin on behalf of our whole race is being betrothed to the common Lord, and human kind, having broken off its intimacy with that alien adulteress[...]Today the Virgin is being set apart from among men, offered to the Creator as the first-fruits of our human clay, and the great and eternal mystery of our re-creation is being accomplished in a wondrous manner." (Transl. Mango, *Homilies of Photius,* 141-142.)

[801] *Ibid,* 79.

[802] *Ibid,* 79.

[803] *Ibid,* 77.

[804] George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in conceptionem ac nativitatem sanctissimae Dominae nostrae Dei genitricis semper virginis Mariae,* col. 1380 A-1381 A.

the Virgin.[805] The concept of renewal is encountered in several passages in the homily and is linked with the notion of the revolt or rather the suspension of natural laws, namely, the paradoxical birth of the Virgin from Joachim and Anna and subsequently of the Saviour.[806] Bridal imagery is again linked with the theme of renewal in the epilogue of the homily in which George declares that because of the birth of the bridal chamber, namely, the Virgin, mankind is considered as part of the royal bridechamber.[807] The image of the Virgin as bride corresponds to the spiritual, humble, pure and bridal state of the soul of her mother.[808] The homilist refers to the Virgin indirectly in a string of epithets and metaphors which express both his emotion and the importance of Mary to the salvation of mankind.[809]

In the homily on the Nativity of the Virgin by Photius the feast is said to be the 'root', the origin, of all other feasts, a statement typical of homilies read on this particular feast, but which also expresses the significance attached to the Virgin as the person through whom salvation was made possible because of the Incarnation.[810] The paradox of the birth of the Virgin is seen as an announcement of the paradox of the birth of the Saviour.[811] Mary's birth is ultimately linked to

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[805] *Ibid,* col. 1397 B.

[806] *Ibid,* col. 1384 B-C. See also, Ch. Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality,* Crestwood N.Y., 1984, 94-98.

[807] George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in conceptionem ac nativitatem,* col. 1397 C-D.

[808] See the description of St Anne and the narration of her prayer to God in *ibid,* cols. 1392 C-1393 D.

[809] *Ibid,* cols. 1381 C-1384 A.

[810] Photius, *On the Nativity of the Virgin,* 89-98 and esp. 90.

[811] *Ibid,* 90, and 91 where the author in a series of antitheses expressed in vivid imagery stresses the paradox of the birth of the Virgin from the sterile womb of Anna.

the miracles, Crucifixion and death of Christ.[812] Adam and Eve, having laid aside the sadness and the *molysmos* (contamination) of the Fall, lead the celebration of the feast that cleansed their sin.[813] Photius clearly introduces the subject of the regeneration of mankind that is linked with the basic concept of incarnational theology: the curse is lifted and human nature puts off the mask of sin and flesh and is transformed into the original image of the Father.[814] Incarnational theology is underscored by use of the word *prosopon* that becomes the *eikon* of the Godhead.[815] In this way Photius establishes also a connexion between incarnational theology and the theology of icons. In a metaphor that encapsulates the typological image of the ladder of Jacob and the soteriological dimension of the Incarnation, the Mother of God is described as the ladder by which human nature rises to heaven.[816] In the words of the homilist the sanctification of matter is presented as the supreme consequence of the birth of the Virgin: the phrase where the homilist says: "the throne of the Lord is being prepared on earth and all that is on earth is sanctified and the heavenly powers are with us on earth..."[817]

Photius compares the virgin birth of Christ from the Virgin Mary to the birth of Adam from the virgin earth, and hence he speaks of Christ as the Second

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[812] *Ibid,* 90.

[813] *Ibid,,* 94.

[814] *Ibid,* 94.

[815] J. Zizioulas, "Truth and Communion," in his *Being as Communion, Studies in Personhood and the Church,* Crestwood N.Y., 1993, 67-122 and esp. 101-109; *idem,* "Personhood and Being," in *Being as Communion,* 27-65 and esp. 49 ff. where the author develops the ecclesiological significance of the person.

[816] Photius, *On the Nativity of the Virgin,* 94-95.

[817] *Ibid,* 95.

Adam.[818] Moreover, he adds that it did not befit the one who humiliated himself to the point of being born to be conceived in pleasure -even though legitimate- because sexual pleasure is a product of the curse from which Christ came to absolve man.[819] The Virgin is portrayed as the living temple of God, the bride of the divine bride-groom, the one whose virtues adorned her like stars in order to receive the sun of justice.[820] The human aspect of the person of Mary serves Christian writers of the ninth century mainly as highlighting the paradox of incarnational theology. To the same end they use the image of the unwedded bride who is betrothed to Christ and finally they draw attention to the assumption of humanity by Christ and to its salvation through his Resurrection.

The Lamenting Virgin

The lament of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross forms part of the elaboration of her human qualities by writers of the Iconoclastic and post-Iconoclastic period. Furthermore, it served the purpose of emphasizing Christ's death on the Cross, a subject that, as we see in the famous example of the Chludov Psalter (plate VII), received particular attention from the seventh century onwards and especially during the Iconoclastic controversy. Mary is portrayed lamenting Christ in a highly emotional manner that urges the congregation to participate in the events of the Passion. She embodies every human mother that grieves for the death of her child and in this way she becomes a link between

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[818] *Ibid*, 97.

[819] *Ibid*, 97.

[820] *Ibid*, 97.

humanity and the divine realm. However, Mary's lament was used also as a means of catechizing for it coincided with Friday in Holy Week, the day on which catechumens were baptised. As we shall see below, however distressed she may be, Mary does not lose her faith and courage and finally consents to the plan of the divine economy.

In his homily on the Annunciation, Photius cites the attitude struck by the Virgin at the Crucifixion in order to display her 'manly', in another word courageous, behaviour (ἀνδρεία) which singled her out from all other women and especially from mothers who express their grief in curses.[821] Her ability to rise above the norms of human behaviour is precisely what makes her, the fragrant flower, the most beautiful and great and God-sculpted "statue" of human nature, worthy of the chambers of heaven.[822] The preacher also points to the role of Mary in the divine plan of salvation, recapitulating the essential features of incarnational theology.[823] Within this framework the author refers to the typological images of the Virgin[824] who is described as the God-made instrument through which mankind was enabled to see God.[825]

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[821] Photius, *On the Annunciation* II, 77, *...εὐσταθεῖ λογισμῷ τον τῆς ἀνδρείας τόνον οὐδαμοῦ φανεῖσα χαυνώσασα...* For the word ἀνδρεία see s.v. Lampe, *PGL,* 129-130.

[822] Photius, *On the Annunciation* II, 76, *... τὸ περικαλλὲς καὶ μέγα καὶ θεολάξευτον ἄγαλμα.* For the word *ἄγαλμα* see s.v. Lampe, *PGL,* 6. For the chambers of heaven see, Photius, *op.cit.,* 77.

[823] *Idem, On the Annunciation* I, 78.

[824] *Idem, On the Annunciation* II, 79.

[825] *Ibid,* 81.

Photius' homilies on Good Friday are of a catechetical character, full of ethical imperatives and exhortations to his audience to follow the teaching of the Gospel and to set aside the concerns of earthly life while concentrating on the kingdom of God. The subject of the Passion of the Lord does not lie at the core of the homilies, which refer to it only as a pretext for introducing the admonition. All of Photius' homilies on Good Friday were delivered from the pulpit of the church of St Irene.[826] The first homily is dominated by the theme of the regeneration of mankind.[827] The baptism of the catechumens gives cause for the patriarch to challenge his audience.[828] The sinner is described as worse than the Jews who crucified the Lord.[829] In order to induce his audience to follow Christian ethical imperatives Photius introduces into his homily the eschatological consideration that when Christ comes again it will be not as a sacrificial lamb but as judge.[830] The joy that one experiences when his conscience

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[826] See Laourdas, *Photiou Omiliai,* 29*.

[827] Photius, *On Good Friday* I, 1.

[828] *Ibid,* 1.

[829] *Ibid,* 3.

[830] *Ibid,* 3. Similarly, the patriarch in his third homily on Good Friday (*op. cit.,* 63-65) states that Easter is the right time for people to think of their conduct, actions and morality. When our life does not conform with the precepts of Christian teaching, says Photius, we become enemies of our own salvation, enemies of the Cross, ungrateful for the benefit received by mankind. Furthermore, he says that justice ought to be the first concern of the Christian and elaborates the passage in the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (I Cor. 13, 1-3) exhorting his audience to set aside conflicts and not to cause schisms in the Church.

is not guilty is said to be an icon, that is, a reflection, of the joy of the kingdom of God.[831]

According to Photius, the best preparation for death is *metanoia* and broken-heartedness expressed in tears.[832] The power of tears is great for they demonstrate the realization of sin and through them the soul is cleansed and liberated.[833] Even greater is the power of tears combined with philanthropy, which is to say, charity.[834] Special emphasis is laid on the Passion of the Lord. Christ is described as the Lord and Creator of all, the one that cannot be contained or circumscribed, who holds the earth in space by his mere word and who moves the sky with a nod.[835] The Mother of God is associated with the Passion of the Lord in a passage that stresses the salvatory importance of the mystery for humanity: He, who was made man by the Virgin, is crucified in order to save mankind.[836] Within this context the sympathy of nature, the darkening of the sun

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[831] Photius, *On Good Friday* I, 10.

[832] *Idem, On Good Friday* II, 15. For the baptism of tears in the ascetic literature of the early Byzantine period see Kallistos Ware, "The Sacrament of Baptism and the Ascetic Life in the Teaching of Mark the Monk," *Studia Patristica* X, 1970, 441-452.

[833] Photius, *On Good Friday* II, 15-16.

[834] *Ibid,* 17. On the subject of philanthropy see D.J. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare,* New Brunswick-New Jersey, 1968; L.Mavrommatis, "Ὄψεις τῆς Φιλανθρωπίας στό Βυζάντιο," in the Proccedings of the 1st International Symposium *Ἡ Καθημερινή Ζωή στό Βυζάντιο,* Athens, 1989, 147-152.

[835] Photius, *On Good Friday* II, 27.

[836] *Ibid,* 27. In the third homily on Good Friday employing triumphant imagery and vocabulary Photius adopts an aggressive stance towards the devil and death as the enemy of man, for the defeat of which Christ came upon earth and was crucified. In the same homily the patriarch concentrates more on the instruments of the Passion and the

and the trembling of the earth serve to strike the contrast between the gratitude of creation to God and the ingratitude of the fallen creature.[837]

Homilies on the Passion are distinguished by standard themes such as anti-Jewish polemic, the sympathy of nature, the humiliation and loneliness of Christ and of the Mother of God. All these themes are expressed vividly through antithetical imagery that serves to intensify of the events narrated. As we have already remarked, in connexion with the Paschal homily by Melito and the hymn of Mary at the foot of the Cross by Romanos the Melode, apart from its ritual characteristics the Marian lament is also weighted with a theological gravity determined by contemporary debates.

In his first homily on Saturday in Holy Week, Photius singles out the events preceding and following the Crucifixion as well the instruments of the Passion.[838] The homily revolves around the commonplace of anti-Jewish polemic, and the narrative around the story according to which Joseph of Arimathea went to the Pharisees to ask for the body of the Lord.[839] The humiliation of Christ by the Jews is reversed through an antithetical imagery that stresses the reality of Jesus' torment and the way in which this fearful experience became the cause of our salvation.[840] In a manner reminiscent of the use made of anti-Jewish polemic

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human actions surrounding the Crucifixion rather than on the theological-speculative aspects of the mystery. See *idem, On Good Friday* III, 62-63.

[837] *Idem, On Good Friday* II, 27.

[838] *Ibid,* 107.

[839] Photius, *Homily on the Burial of the Lord* I, homily 11 in Laourdas, 105-121.

[840] The passage where Photius, commenting on the Jews spitting upon Christ, speaks of their spittle as drops of dew with which Christ dried out the storm of sin exemplifies the

by earlier authors, Photius addresses the Jews in the form of a dialogue in which he interrogates *the* Jew regarding the daring he displayed in electing to crucify Christ.[841] Here, too, the sympathy of nature is contrasted with the ingratitude of the Jews.[842] The homilist describes vividly the way in which the former privileges of the elected people of God became void of grace after the Crucifixion.[843]

Photius elaborates the account in the Gospel (Mark 15:43) according to which Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to ask permission to obtain and bury the body of the Lord. The theme of the one who is a stranger and abandoned by disciples and friends is introduced into Joseph's address to Pilate.[844] Of particular importance for the study of the lament is what follows upon the permission granted by Pilate: Joseph takes the body of the Lord in order to bury it and at this point the author introduces a lament which, though not voiced by the Virgin, bears a strong resemblance to the lament of the Virgin at the burial of the Lord.[845] It should be noted that, to my knowledge, this is the first instance when a homilist

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rhetorical ingenuity of the preacher. I have been unable to find a parallel image in any other homily on the subject. See *ibid,* 107.

[841] *Ibid,* 107. On the subject of anti-Jewish polemic in Byzantine homiletics see M. Cunningham, "Anti-Judaism and Collective Identity in Early Byzantine Homilies," (forthcoming); K. Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters,* Cambridge, 1992, who argues that Jews depicted in miniatures of ninth-century psalters are caricatures and thus ironically identified as Iconoclasts and discusses earlier literature on the subject.

[842] Photius, *Homily on the Burial of the Lord* I, 108.

[843] *Ibid,* 108. The homily is interspersed with the *topos* of anti-Jewish polemic. See for example *ibid,* 113-115.

[844] *Ibid,* 110.

[845] *Ibid,* 111 ff.

introduces a lament not as Christ is on his way to or is suffering his Crucifixion, but at his Burial. As we have already seen, antithesis offers itself as a formula often resorted to in homilies of the Passion. The philanthropy of God is contrasted with the ingratitude of the Jews who represent mankind in general,[846] the sorrow over Christ's death with the anticipation and joy of the Resurrection, and so on. The lament of Joseph is characterized by the same antithetical formula expressed in the most immediate fashion. Which 'painterly- speech' could express his mood at that time?[847] He rejoiced for having obtained what he desired, but at the same time he lamented at the sight of the dead Christ. Joseph's lament is notable for the distinct emphasis it lays on his experience of touching the dead body while at the same time it gives great importance to the emotions that are evoked by this experience. The features of the dead are referred to one by one and each induces the author to lament the deceased.

The tomb and the Burial of the Lord are described in a lyrical and patently emotional manner as the most incredible and paradoxical mystery.[848] The paradox revolves around the antithesis of the creator who dies and the life-giving death that brings joy through tears and sorrow. The tomb of Christ is depicted as the bridal chamber from which there emerged the salvation of mankind. As the

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[846] See for example *ibid,* 113-114.

[847] *Ibid,* 111, *...Τίς ἂν ζωγράφος λόγος εἰκονίσει τὴν τότε τούτου διάθεσιν;*

[848] *Ibid,* 118, "How does He suffer His body to be wrapped in grave-clothes Who has spread out the vault of heaven as a much-famed wonder?..." (Transl. by Mango, *Homilies of Photius,* 208.)

Second Adam, Christ is linked with the regeneration of mankind and the second dawn of human existence.[849]

The theme of the regeneration of mankind occupies a central place in the second homily delivered by Photius on Saturday in Holy Week.[850] Christ assumed the flesh of a slave and accepted the Cross, and death and burial so that man might revert to his paradisiac state.[851] The patriarch speaks of the many means that God used in order to give back to man what was initially his own. The Old Testament was the time of didacticism, the Law and the prophets and even of the beneficiary intervention of God and the punishment of mankind.[852] Photius places the Incarnation of the Word of God in the same unbroken sequence.[853] Of all the elements in the whole story of the Incarnation he concentrates on the Passion of the Lord whose sole purpose was the liberation of man from the bonds of sin and death.[854] The sympathy of nature is prominent in this homily, too.[855] An antithesis

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[849] *Ibid,* 118.

[850] Photius, *Homily on the Burial of the Lord* II, homily 12 in Laourdas, 122-127.

[851] *Ibid,* 122.

[852] *Ibid,* 124.

[853] *Ibid,* 124, "For the jointly-throning and co-eternal Son and Word of the eternal Father,..., makes unto himself a flesh from virginal blood that He may re-create us..." (Transl. Mango, *Homilies of Photius,* 215).

[854] Photius, *Homily on the Burial of the Lord* II, 124, "Our Lord is struck for our sake and he is crucified, and dies, and is buried...that He may grant us freedom, resurrection and immortality." (Transl. Mango, *Homilies of Photius,* 215).

[855] Photius, *Homily on the Burial of the Lord* II, 124, "He is crucified and dies and is buried, and the earth quakes in fear, and the curtain of the temple is rent, and stones are torn apart, and the sun is covered with much darkness, not because the moon intercepts...but...emitting a cry and bewailing..." (transl. Mango, *Homilies of Photius,*

is constructed out of two conventional features of the Passion homilies, namely, anti-Jewish polemic and the sympathy of nature.[856] The shared response and commiseration of nature are contrasted with the ingratitude of the Jews who are held responsible for the death of their prophets and even of the creator whose coming was announced by them.[857] Gratitude and ingratitude are juxtaposed in relation to the Jews whose place was inherited by the Christians through the sacrifice of the Lord and the call to communion with his body and blood.[858]

We have already seen how Patriarch Photius treated the Crucifixion and the Burial of the Lord. His near contemporary, George of Nicomedia, delivered homilies on the same occasions (Friday and Saturday in Holy Week) employing many features already encountered in the homilies of Photius, albeit his interest lay largely in the Mother of God. The homilies that will be studied below do not focus so much on the person of Christ as on that of his mother. This is the reason why George of Nicomedia represents a landmark in the study of the lament. The

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215-216). Note the dramatic intensity with which the participation of nature is described in the historical present, a tense that plays an important role if we take into consideration the eternal present of Church time (M. Harl, "Les modèles d'un temps idéal dans quelques récits de vie Pères Cappadociens," *Le temps chrétien de le fin de l'antiquité au Moyen Âge, IIIe-XIIIe siècles,* Paris, 1984, 220-243, and esp. 228-231). R. Taft ("The *Synaxarion* of Evergetis in the History of Byzantine Liturgy," in M. Mullett and A. Kirby (eds.), *The Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism,* Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations 6.1, Belfast, 1994, 274-294 and esp. 279) comments, though briefly, on the cosmological dimension of the church and the liturgy.

[856] Photius, *Homily on the Burial of the Lord* II, 125.

[857] *Ibid,* 125.

[858] *Ibid,* 126.

imagery he uses in his homily on Good Friday[859] is inspired by relevant texts from previous centuries, such as the Paschal homily by Melito of Sardis and the hymn on Mary at the foot of the Cross by Romanos the Melode.[860] As far as I know George's homily on Good Friday is the first extant example of a Marian homily on the Crucifixion of the Lord.[861] A merely superficial reading suggests Mary's central place in the narration serves to emphasize the strong link between Christ and his mother. But George, as a preacher, is concerned first with the theological interpretation of the Passion of the Lord, second with the vivid transmission of events to his audience, and third with the participation of his audience in the events narrated.[862] Within this context Mary's central place can

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[859] George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in sepulturam Jesu Christi,* PG 100, cols. 1457-1489 and *idem, In Immaculatae Virginis in sepulcro assistentiam, et gratiarum actio pro gloriosa resurrectione,* PG 100, cols. 1489D-1504C (henceforth abbreviated as *In Immaculatae Virginis in sepulcro assistentiam*). According to A. Ehrhard, (*Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche,* 3 vols., Leipzig, 1937-1939) the homily on Good Friday survives in ten manuscripts. The cursory reading of the catalogues of manuscripts that I undertook revealed that there are at least thirty manuscripts dating from the tenth to the seventeenth centuries in which the homily survives(see Appendix).

[860] For discussion of these texts see chapters I and II.

[861] The popularity of the homily is attested by the fact that it was prescribed as a reading for Good Friday and art historians regard it as the source of the new iconographic types that emerged in the post-Iconoclastic period, such as the Deposition, the Burial, and the later Man of Sorrows and the Virgin of the Passion. See Maguire, *Art and Eloquence,* 101 ff.; Ch. Barber, "The Monastic Typikon for Art Historians," in *The Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism,* 198-214 and esp. 204-205; R. Cormack, *Painting the Soul. Icons, Death Masks and Shrouds,* London, 1997, 113.

[862] For the use of description and narrative by Byzantine homilists see Maguire, *Art and Eloquence,* 22-23. For discussion of the theological aspects of the Paschal mystery see

be interpreted as the means by which George emphasizes Christ's full humanity. The homily on the Crucifixion and the Burial of Christ begins with the narration of the events of Thursday in Holy Week: the Last Supper, the arrest, trial and the way taken by Christ to Golgotha. George asserts that the Virgin was present in every one of these scenes marking the way of the Lord to his death and the way of mankind to salvation.[863] Therefore, it is not the relationship of Jesus and Mary that is at stake but Christ's full humanity, a proof of which is his link with his mother. Similarly, Mary's lament that intersperses the homily voices her distress over the loss of her son and her God within the context of his salvatory mission. The lament represents the combination of the two themes that acquired distinct prominence during the Iconoclastic controversy: the Passion of the Lord and the place of the Virgin in the mystery of the Incarnation.

A close reading of the homily on Good Friday reveals that George employs standard themes of the lament: the *topos* of anti-Jewish polemic, the sympathy of nature and the solitude of the deceased and of the person who laments, as well as an antithetical imagery that embraces all the themes mentioned above. The lament of the Virgin intersperses the narrative, rendering it more vivid to the audience. George's narrative technique is skilfully contrived. Although it may seem tedious to the modern reader,[864] when read out aloud this

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H. U. von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale,* transl. by A. Nichol s, Edinburgh, 1990, 148-168.

[863] The events of Thursday are described in a concise narrative in which the presence of Mary is particularly emphasized. See George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in sepulturam Jesu Christi,* col. 1464 A-B.

[864] Mango, *The Homilies of Photius,* 8.

homily is very finely structured in that the narrative is balanced by poetic interventions that arouse emotion and are pleasant to the ear of the listener. Throughout the homily George plays upon emotions, probably as an indirect way of asserting humanity especially in the narration of the Passion.[865]

The events and the standard themes of the lament are expressed through an antithetical imagery that contrasts life with death, mildness and kindness with murder, gratitude with ingratitude and so on. The pattern of the narrative is antithetical: the goodness of the Lord is contrasted with the wickedness of creatures, the harmless lamb with the wild beasts, and finally the mildness of Christ is contrasted with the anger of men.[866] A sharp distinction is drawn between Mary's fervent love for her son and the rebukes, the whipping, and the mockery of Christ by the Jews.[867] When the narrative reaches the place of the Crucifixion[868] the Virgin, pushed aside by the soldiers, eventually manages to approach the Cross and there, at the foot of the Cross, addresses Christ in a long lament that reproduces all the images we have encountered in the study of the development of the Marian lament. The ingratitude of mankind occupies the first

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[865] Cf. the imagery of the homily to the miniatures of the Crucifixion, Deposition and Burial of Paris. gr. 510, f. 30v in L. Brubaker, "Miniatures and Liturgy: Evidence from the Ninth-Century Codex *Paris. Gr.* 510," *B* LXVI, 1996, 9-34 and esp. 11f. and fig. 1 on p. 20.

[866] George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in sepulturam Jesu Christi,* col. 1464B.

[867] *Ibid,* col. 1465D-1468A.

[868] Interestingly, the *contrapuncto* between each suffering of Christ finds its counterpart in the heart of the mother. See *ibid,* col. 1468D, "O, as the nail in the hand, was the sword (*ἡ καιρία*) was implanted in her heart...As the drops of blood (flowed) from the wounds, how much more did the tears flow from her eyes..."

place,[869] and is contrasted with the miracles of Christ, the resurrection of Lazarus, the healing of the blind, and the curing of lepers; finally, his philanthropy in general is contrasted with the daring murder performed on Golgotha.[870] Another commonplace of homiletics is the contrast between the past, full of happiness and the afflicted present.[871]

Anti-Jewish polemic is employed by George of Nicomedia to contrast his community with the outsiders and to give it a sense of righteousness.[872] The Jews represent the whole of mankind that put Christ to death. Christ is described as the innocent lamb: mild, sweet and humble.[873] His qualities are contrasted with those of his murderers. In order to add intensity to the crime of humanity George contrasts the ingratitude of mankind with nature which recognizes and laments the death of the Saviour. Moreover, nature is called upon by the Virgin who seeks the consolation of others who share her grief. In her lament Mary calls the sun to set, the sky to mourn, the earth to tremble and the meadows to share in her weeping.[874] In this way, George emphasizes Mary's solitude in the foreign land.

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[869] *Ibid,* col. 1469C, "Is this the reward for your great philanthropy? With such honours do the ones who benefitted reward you. O, most unjust daring! O, unholy judgment! The unjust condemn the just; the guilty accuse the innocent; the ungrateful kill the benefactor; the wicked slaves put the good master on the Cross..." See also col. 1472A.

[870] *Ibid,* col. 1472A.

[871] *Ibid,* col. 1476A. For the contrast of the different periods of time in the lament see above, chapters I and II and Maguire, *Art and Eloquence,* 96-97.

[872] George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in sepulturam Jesu Christi,* col. 1457B-C. See also, Cunningham, "Anti-Judaism and Collective Identity in Early Byzantine Homilies."

[873] George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in sepulturam Jesu Christi,* col. 1468A-B.

[874] *Ibid,* col. 1472C.

Similarly, when he describes the scene where the Virgin stands in the courtyard of Annas and Kaiaphas waiting for the decision of the court, the homilist stresses her loneliness among the people who were against her son.

The solitude of the Virgin leads on to the lament of the mother at the time that Christ is being judged.[875] George describes in a very vivid and dramatic way the agony of the Virgin waiting outside the court-room[876] and trying to guess what was happening inside from the random comments of passers-by;[877] her despair on learning that they unanimously wanted to put Christ to death;[878] and her total isolation when all his disciples and friends hid themselves or denied they were his disciples.[879] Her solitude, that makes her pain even harder to bear, figures large in her lament. In a manner reminiscent of judicial oratory, the Mother of God asks why the court should want to condemn Christ.[880]

The suffering of Christ and his humiliation by the soldiers at Herod's palace are described by broken-heartened Mary who laments her son: "How could she bear to see him being led away as a common criminal? How could her spirit bear to see him being condemned and whipped in public, and suffering and rebuked by the soldiers?"[881] Every torment the Lord was suffering was for Mary a

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[875] George prepares the lament by noting that the disciples were scattered about because of their fear of the Jews and draws a contrast between them and the Virgin whose desire for her beloved overcame the danger. See *ibid,* col. 1464 B.

[876] *Ibid,* col. 1465 B.

[877] *Ibid,* col. 1464 B.

[878] *Ibid,* col. 1465 A.

[879] *Ibid,* col. 1465 A-B.

[880] *Ibid,* col. 1465B.

[881] *Ibid,* col. 1465C-D.

sword pointed at against her heart even before the Crucifixion.[882] The mother's pain is described as fire that melts her heart, as a knife that penetrates her very being.[883] Her motherly love for Christ is expressed in words most apt to convey the emotional tension and gravity of the scene.[884] Mary wishes she could suffer in the place of Christ and calls upon nature to respond to the injustice.[885] The twin fires of her love for Christ, her Son and God, bring to mind the *kontakion* by Romanos the Melode in which the Virgin laments Christ in a similar way.[886] The accomplishment of the prophecies, the gall and vinegar, the raiment for which the soldiers cast lots, the piercing of the side and each successive event of the Crucifixion make the Virgin weep bitterly at the suffering of the Lord.[887]

The exalted status of the Virgin does not contradict her emotional mood as depicted in the homily. According to George, Mary's pain and distress at the time of the Crucifixion are justified by the 'excess of the daring' directed against her son.[888] The homilist goes on to assert that Mary is free of the passions of human nature, and so describes her in terms of the all-holy and all-pure Virgin whom we came across in other homilies of his and in the literature of previous centuries. The fact that George is at pains to establish Mary's exalted status is

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[882] *Ibid,* col. 1468 A.

[883] *Ibid,* col. 1468B-C.

[884] *Ibid,* col. 1472A, "... ἐγύμνωσάν σε τὸ γλυκύτατόν μοι φέγγος· ἐγύμνωσαν τον τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἥλιον· ἐγύμνωσαν το ὡραιότατόν μοι ἐγκαλλώπισμα."

[885] *Ibid,* col. 1472B.

[886] See chapter II and George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in sepulturam Jesu Christi,* col. 1473B.

[887] *Ibid,* col. 1477C-1480B.

[888] *Ibid,* col. 1464 B.

proved by his recounting an episode that occured at the time of the Crucifixion. The episode is not encountered in any other written record of the Crucifixion prior to the ninth century. In the dialogue between Mary and Christ on the Cross, George has Christ entrust his disciples and the whole of mankind to his mother who thenceforth was to be their spiritual guide.[889] So it is George who first introduces the ecclesiological character of the Virgin by declaring her to be the Mother of the Church through whose mediation the faithful could find a refuge.[890] When Christ entrusts his mother to the beloved disciple (Jn 20:26-27; plate VIII), George adds the crucial words with which Christ asks John to respect Mary and to accept her as *καθηγουμένη* of himself and the other disciples.[891]

Even more important in any study of the lament is the attitude taken by the Virgin. In his narration of the Last Supper, George states that it was Mary rather than any of the disciples who retained deep in her heart all the words spoken by Jesus.[892] Despite her affliction, she follows him to the court and later to Golgotha when all his friends and disciples are reported to have scattered for fear of the Jews.[893] After the soldiers have crucified Christ, the Virgin makes her way to the foot of the Cross and addresses her Son.[894] Christ recognizes the fire that is

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[889] For Mary's spiritual guidance in the Church see A. Kniazeff, *La Mère de Dieu dans l'Église Orthodoxe,* Paris, 1990, 68 ff.

[890] George of Nicomedia, *Oratio in sepulturam Jesu Christi,* col. 1476D.

[891] *Ibid,* col. 1477A-B.

[892] *Ibid,* col. 1464 A.

[893] *Ibid,* col.1464 B.

[894] *Ibid,*col. 1469 B-C.

consuming his mother's heart and entrusts her to the beloved disciple.[895] He urges his mother to overcome her nature and to accept the suffering of his death, for it will bring salvation to mankind.[896] The Virgin, who so far has been depicted as the afflicted mother, now changes her attitude and consents to the accomplishment of the mystery. Although her lament will be re-introduced at the time of the Burial, at the foot of the Cross the Virgin overcomes her human nature and enters into a deeper communion with God. Perhaps this is the point that George is at pains to convey to his congregation of catechumens. Mary's sorrow is searing her heart, but it is not a godless sorrow. The Mother of God has been made aware of the salvific mystery that is to be acomplished by the death of Christ and so submits to the will of God. Her 'conversion' to a higher mode of existence reveals the dynamic perception of her person by George of Nicomedia and certainly does not allow room for her arriving at an understanding being a humble human being whose greatest virtue was purity and blind obedience.[897]

George pictures the Virgin as devastated by the Crucifixion that has just taken place but nonetheless conscious of the Resurrection that is to come and trying to arrange all that is necessary for the burial of the Lord.[898] She herself finds the place where the Lord should be lain, asks to whom does it belong and

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[895] *Ibid,* col. 1473D.

[896] *Ibid,* col. 1476B-C.

[897] P. Nellas (*Deification in Christ. The Nature of Human Person,* Crestwood N.Y., 1987) develops the idea of man's return to the prelapsarian state (that is his state before the Fall) and the potential of his restoration of the image of God in himself.

[898] *Ibid,* col. 1484A.

hearing that he was a friend of Jesus seeks him out and begs him go to Pilate and request the body of the Lord.[899] Her address to Joseph of Aramathea is in the form of a lament in which she makes much of the fact that she is a foreigner in his land and utterly alone.[900] The deposition of the body of Christ from the Cross is again described in the lament of the Virgin.[901] George allows the mother's sensibilities full play: the Virgin laments as she receives each member of her son's body into her arms and wishes she could see her son alive again and hear his voice once more.[902]

George's devotion to Mary is expressed in the epilogue where the homilist speaks in the first person singular.[903] He glorifies the economy, the mercy, the tolerance of God.[904] In a series of clauses that start with the verb 'I venerate' (φιλῶ) he expresses his devotion to the instruments of the Passion and the tomb of the Lord,[905] but above all to the person of the Mother of God. George draws particular attention to the hands of the Virgin that have assisted the divine economy, namely, the Nativity and the Burial of Christ.[906] Finally, the Mother of

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[899] *Ibid,* col. 1484B-C.

[900] *Ibid,* col. 1484C-1485B.

[901] *Ibid,* col. 1488A-C.

[902] *Ibid,* col. 1488B.

[903] *Ibid,* col. 1488C-D.

[904] *Ibid,* col. 1488D.

[905] *Ibid,* col. 1489A-B , "I venerate your suffering,...I venerate your Cross,...I venerate the nails,...I venerate the wounds in your limbs (τας διατρήσεις τῶν μελῶν)...I venerate the rod...I venerate the sponge..."

[906] *Ibid,* col. 1489C.

God is glorified as the only one who saw and shared the divine Passion and as the herald of immortality.[907]

George's particular devotion to the Mother of God is also evident in the homily on Saturday in Holy Week which must have been delivered after the homily on Good Friday. George vouches for the presence of the Virgin at Christ's tomb despite the contrary account given in the Gospel. The silence of the Evangelists on the presence of the Mother is explained as a deliberate omission by them in order to enhance the credibility of the story of the Resurrection. If the good news of the Resurrection were to be announced by the mother it might not be believed, given the intimate relationship between mother and son. George maintains that Christ appeared to his mother in a more 'familiar' and 'secret' way, [908] and that Mary his mother saw the resurrected Christ even before the angels.[909] The homilist gives a brief account of the events that preceded the Burial of the Lord and says that it would be only natural for the mother who shared his last hours and was aware of what was to come to remain outside the tomb waiting for his glorious Resurrection. Mary addresses Christ at length, dwelling on the awful mystery of his death on the Cross and urging him to show to the world and to her, who longs to see him again, his glorious Resurrection. Emphasis is laid on visual perception: the need of the Virgin to see her son once again, to be in his presence and to hear his voice. Here, nature too plays an important role: as at the

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[907] *Ibid,* col. 1489C.

[908] George of Nicomedia, *In immaculatae Virginis in sepulcro assistentiam, et gratiarum actio pro gloriosa resurrectione,* col. 1497B.

[909] *Ibid,* col. 1500C.

Crucifixion it expressed grief and rage, now it expresses exhilaration, joy and peace.[910] The homily concludes with the homilist urging Christ to reveal to the congregation his radiance and his ineffable beauty. On behalf of his congregation he wishes to be granted the grace to see, hear and feel the presence of the Lord.[911]

Conclusion

The importance of the cult of the Virgin Mary in the Iconoclastic period is evinced in the literature of the second half of the ninth century. The Triumph of Orthodoxy coincided with the growth of the cult and the composition of Marian homilies multiplied until it was a standard feature of Byzantine homiletics. In the period following the restoration of icons devotion to the Mother of God became a definitive symbol of Orthodoxy. In the fifty years that ensued after the Council of 843 the Mother of God was the central figure in homiletic and hymnographical literature, most particularly in the homilies of Patriarch Photius and George of Nicomedia.

In post-Iconoclastic literature the Virgin is portrayed in a manner that recapitulates all attributes of her person that had been bestowed on her by Christian writers of preceding centuries. The lamenting Virgin expresses both the human qualities of Mary elaborated in the writings of the Iconoclastic period and her association with the death of Christ. In the literature of the ninth century Mary's lament reaches a zenith that can be compared only to the poetic ingenuity

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[910] *Ibid,* col. 1501C-D.

[911] *Ibid,* col. 1504B.

of Romanos the Melode in the fifth century. Those two periods, the fifth and the ninth centuries, were crucial to the development of the lament of the Virgin and both were times of significant changes in Byzantine theology. It was in the fifth century that Mary became the means by which Christology was defined and in the ninth century, after more than a century of bitter struggle over artistic representation, she emerged as the symbol of Orthodoxy, once again the means to the correct understanding of the Incarnation of Christ and the mystery of the salvation wrought by him. The person of Mary and the suffering of Christ were essential to comprehension of the Incarnation, through which matter was sanctified and consequently artistic representation was sanctioned as legitimate. In ninth-century literature the Virgin became the ideal disciple of Jesus; at the foot of the Cross she underwent conversion, thus superseding her human nature and entering into the time of grace. In their writings, Photius and George recapitulated all aspects of Mary's person: Mary as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies, Mary the Protectress of Constantinople, Mary the human Mother of God, and Mary lamenting at the foot of the Cross. However, the aspects of Mary's person that were to prevail and determine both her cult and her iconography in subsequent centuries were her tenderness and her sorrow at the foot of the Cross.

EPILOGUE

The Marian lament, as a theme of Byzantine hymnography and homiletics, came into being gradually in the course of the fifth to the ninth centuries. After the ninth century the lament of the Virgin at the foot of the cross was elaborated by Byzantine hymnographers and homilists and underwent further stages of development. In the Eastern Church today the service of the Burial of the Lord on the eve of Good Friday comprises a hymn that is sung during the *Epitaphios* and which is known as the lament of Mary (Κανων Θρηνώδης τῆς Θεοτόκου).[912] This *Lamenting Canon of the Theotokos* is one of the most poetic texts of Orthodox liturgical tradition and still exercises unfailing appeal to the people. No single writer can be considered the author of the text that has been constantly adapted to the changing needs of Church services as they have developed over the centuries.

The Marian lament can be understood only as part of the growth of the cult of the Virgin Mary in Byzantium. The study of the cult is no easy task since the sole dogmatic formulation the Church devised regarding Mary was her title as 'Theotokos'. The evolution of her cult as well as the development of her lament can be deduced only through careful study of the sources. The lament of the Mother of God in Byzantium draws its material both from Late Antique rhetoric

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[912] The 'Lamentation of the Most Holy Theotokos' is sung after the Creed and the Canon of the Crucifixion of the Lord during the small compline of Holy Friday. See *The Lenten Triodion,* 617. Note however that the hymnography of the Passion (that is Holy Thursday, Friday and Saturday in Holy Week) is imbued with images and vocabulary characteristic of the Marian lament from the fifth to the ninth centuries.

and from the Jewish element in Christianity. Laments of the Old Testament foreshadow traditional features of the Marian lament: the sympathy of nature, the solitude of the mourner, the contrast between the past and the present and contemplation of the future without the beloved person. The earliest example of a Paschal homily is the homily written in the second century by Melito of Sardis. The text, which does not comprise a Marian lament as such, is notable for its treatment of the traditional features of the lament in the context of the Paschal mystery. Typology, one of the main concerns of Melito, also determined the first stages in the cult of the Mother of God. The few references to Mary in the Gospels were amplified by early Christian authors in the apocryphal writings which narrated the conception, childhood and adolescent years of Mary. In time, the Virgin Mary was invested with the authority of Jewish tradition and was presented as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies that announced the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of mankind. The early Christian centuries witnessed also the development of the Marian feasts. Whereas in the beginning these were inextricably linked with the Nativity of Christ, they gradually became more numerous and acquired a certain degree of independence, although Mary was always thought of as fulfilling a role in the divine plan for the salvation of mankind.

The fifth century represents a turning-point in the cult of the Virgin for it was the first and only time that Mary was at the centre of a theological controversy. The Nestorian controversy, although nominally concerned with the title 'Theotokos', was all about a more precise definition of Christology,

particularly with the way in which the two natures of Christ (human and divine) coexisted within the person of the historical Jesus. Acceptance of the title 'Theotokos' for the Virgin Mary at the Council of Ephesus in 431, signified acceptance of Christ's full divinity and stressed that the Son born of Mary was truly the Word of God. In advocating acceptance Cyril of Alexandria, the opponent of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, spoke in paradoxical terms, for instance, applying the epithet 'Mother of God' to Mary. Similarly, Cyril said 'God died on the cross' in order to emphasize the ultimate sacrifice of Christ. For the first time the Virgin and the suffering and death of Christ were at the centre of a Christological debate. The years following the Council of Ephesus witnessed the rise of the Marian lament. Its roots are generally held to have lain in the Syriac Orient, but its most celebrated author is Romanos the Melode whose hymn about Mary at the foot of the Cross is an outstanding example of a Marian lament in the first centuries of Byzantium; subsequently it served as a source of inspiration for writers of later ages.

In the fifth century the Marian lament reflected a growing interest in the person of Mary and a development of her cult. It was never the intention of the present study to deal with the period intervening between the Council of Ephesus and the beginning of Iconoclasm because the place of the Virgin as protectress of Constantinople has already been dealt with most ably in recent scholarly writings. In order to study the lament in ninth-century Byzantium, of which significant laments survive, I was obliged to span a gap in modern scholarship. The place of Mary in the Iconoclastic controversy had not yet been determined in detail and

such opinions as have been expressed on the subject are often contradictory. Any study of the role Mary played in the controversy and of the attitude each side took towards her is made even more difficult by the scarcity of contemporary sources. However, sources dating to the eighth and the ninth centuries reveal a lively interest in the Mother of God. The Iconophile historiographical sources in particular repeatedly assert that devotion to the Virgin is a precept of Orthodoxy and insist on sincere veneration of her. The Virgin is also referred to in hagiographical sources which -although they were written after the Triumph of Orthodoxy- reflect Iconophile attitudes. In various *Lives* of saints the Virgin appears as protectress, intercessor, and guide, as well as a model of virtuous living. More important than those scattered references is the substantial Marian corpus of homilies and hymns composed in honour of the Virgin Mary in the course of the controversy by the most ardent opponents of Iconoclasm. Among them were Germanos I of Constantinople, Andrew of Crete, John of Damascus, Cosmas of Maiouma, the *Graptoi* brothers and Theodore the Stoudite -all of who have been the subject of detailed research. In writing of the Virgin homilists and hymnographers of the Iconoclastic period are moved to express themselves emotionally; at the same time they draw attention to the human aspect of her person. In many instances, Mary is associated with the Passion of Christ, a theme that runs through works by Iconophile writers. Even if we are not able to determine with any certainty the attitude struck by Iconoclasts towards the Mother of God we may at least assert that Iconophiles saw in Mary a symbol of Orthodoxy. For them, artistic representation of the divine was understood as a

consequence of the Incarnation: the divine could be depicted upon matter because matter had been sanctified when Christ became man in the womb of the Virgin. This symbolic language made of Mary the image *par excellence* of Orthodoxy and, more specifically, the vindication of the cult of icons.

The restoration of icons was celebrated in 843. The immediate post-Iconoclastic period witnessed a significant growth in the cult of the Virgin Mary who dominates both the art and the literature of the period following the Triumph of Orthodoxy. The first mosaic made after 843 was that of the Virgin with Christ which still decorates the apse of St Sophia in Constantinople. The work was commissioned by Patriarch Photius who delivered a homily on the occasion of its inauguration. Similarly, the first church built after the restoration of icons was the New Church also in Constantinople and likewise dedicated to the Mother of God. The central space in the feast-icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy is occupied by a large image of the Virgin Hodegetria.

Similarly, Mary is a central figure in the literature of the post-Iconoclastic period. Both Patriarch Photius and George of Nicomedia dedicated numerous homilies to the Virgin which they delivered on various feasts of hers. In their work Mary emerges as the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies, the triumphant Virgin who safeguards the imperial city, and as the human mother of Jesus. The Virgin of Tenderness, already prefigured in the literature of the Iconoclastic period, becomes more prominent in the work of post-Iconoclastic authors, such as Photius, George of Nicomedia, Joseph the Hymnographer and Leo the Wise. In the homilies on Friday and Saturday in Holy Week by Photius of

Constantinople and George of Nicomedia, the Virgin is once again associated with the Passion of the Lord. Both preachers reproduce the standard *topoi* of the lament, namely, the themes of the injustice of death, anti-Jewish polemic, the sympathy of nature, and the solitude of the mourner, all expressed through a powerful antithetical imagery.

The homily on Good Friday by George of Nicomedia is particularly pertinent to the study of the lament since it represents probably the earliest example of a Marian homily on Good Friday. The Virgin occupies in the text a prominent place and all the events of the Crucifixion are narrated through her lament. Mary appears to be at once the human mother of Jesus and the transcendental model of mankind in that at the foot of the Cross she undergoes a process of painful conversion from her natural, human existence to an ecclesial being as a true disciple of Christ. She feels the human pain of the mother yet does not lose sight of the kingdom of God. She expresses her distress but also awaits the Resurrection. She shares in the sacrifice of her beloved son for the salvation of mankind and so participates once again in the plan of the divine economy. Through the gift of Christ's death she is elevated to be the spiritual guide of the disciples and becomes an intercessor for mankind.

Modern scholars have suggested that this particular homily by George of Nicomedia was drawn upon by artists in their development of the iconography of the Deposition from the Cross and the *Threnos.* The Marian lament is the preacher's ingenious device combining in an eloquent sermon the two themes essential to the defence of divine images: the virgin Mother of God and the death

of Christ on the Cross. Both themes were essential to an understanding of incarnational theology which from the ninth century onwards was to be the corner-stone of Orthodoxy. Hence, the Marian lament is not merely a literary invention but a persuasive expression of dogmatic theology. In the person of the lamenting Virgin Byzantine writers found the most convincing argument affirming Christ's Incarnation and sacrifice on the Cross; events that opened the way to the deification of mankind.

PLATES

Plate I

Ivory Panel in the British Museum. Sixth century. Above the figure of the Virgin there is an archangel holding a Cross and the three Magi.

Below is the Nativity.

Plate II

Ivory Diptych with Christ Enthroned (left) *and theTheotokos with Christ Emmanuel* (right). Christ is flanked by saints (probably Evangelists) and the Theotokos by the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Sixth century. Staatliche Museum, Berlin.

Plate III

Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints Theodore and George and two Angels. Encaustic icon. Sixth century. St Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai.

Plate IV

The Triumph of Orthodoxy. Constantinople, c. 1400. London, British Museum. National Icon Collection, no. 18. Upper Register: the icon of the Virgin flanked by two winged angels. Lower Register (left): The nun Theodosia holding an icon of Christ.

Plate V

The Theotokos and Child Enthroned. Apse mosaic, St Sophia, Constantinople.

The mosaic was inaugurated in 867 by the Patriarch Photius of Constantinople.

Plate VI

Gold Reliquary Diptych Pendant. Two panels worked in gold repoussé, chasing and punching. Constantinople ninth to eleventh centuries. Petsopoulos Collection. Axia Gallery, London.

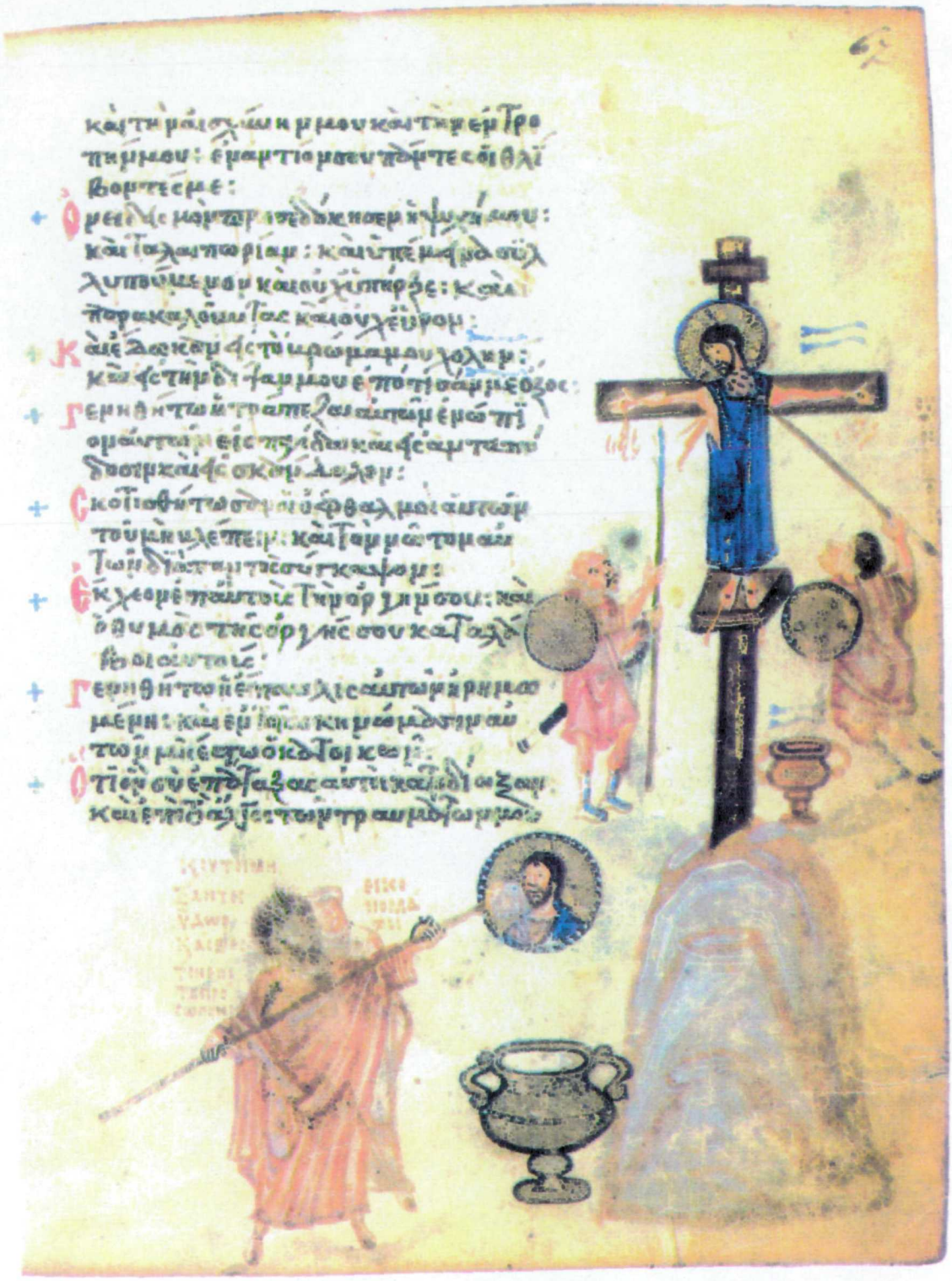

Plate VII

The Crucifixion and Iconoclasts. Chludov Psalter, folio 67r. *Circa* 870-875.

State Historical Museum, Moscow.

Plate VIII

Front of the Fieschi-Morgan Reliquary. Crucifixion and Saints. Early ninth century. Cloisonné enamel. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

APPENDIX

List of manuscripts containing the Homily on Good Friday

by George of Nicomedia

Λόγος εἰς τὸ "Εἱστήκεισαν δὲ παρὰ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἡ Μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τῆς Μητρὸς αὐτοῦ" καὶ εἰς τὴν θεόσωμον ταφὴν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τῇ ἁγίᾳ καὶ Μεγάλῃ Παρασκευῇ.

Oratio VIII, ***Oratio in Illud: "Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus, et soror Matris ejus: atque in sepulturam divini corporis Domini nostri Jesu Christi: sancta ac magna die Parasceves,*** **PG 100, cols. 1457A-1489D**

1. Cod. Vat. Ottob. gr. 14, tenth century
2. Cod. 3, Skete Kausokalyvion, Mt.Athos, eleventh century
3. Cod. Bodl. Miscell. 34 (Auct. E2.6) ff. 288-294, twelfth century
4. Cod. Par. gr. 699, ff. 98-116, twelfth century (Chrysostom Homiliary)
5. Cod. Par. gr. 1505, ff.99-109v, twelfth century
6. Cod. Par. gr. 759, ff. 1-106, twelfth century
7. Cod. Vat. gr. 1636, ff. 201v-209, (ff. 191-210 are dated in the twelfth century)
8. Cod. Vat. gr. 395, ff. 94-113v, twelfth century
9. Cod. Berol. gr. 77, twelfth century
10. Cod.Vat. gr 564, ff. 54v-66, thirteenth century
11. Pantokrator monastery, Mt.Athos, Cod. 1037.3 (19), parchment, thirteenth century

12. Cod. 2083.26, National Library of Greece, ff.171-184v, thirteenth-fourteenth century

    Λίνου Πολίτη, *Κατάλογος Χειρογράφων Εθνικής Βιβλιοθήκης, Πραγματείαι,* Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 1991

13. Cod. Par. gr. 980, ff 119-169, fourteenth century
14. Iveron Monastery, Mt.Athos, Cod. 4774.654 (13), paper, fourteenth century
15. Cod. Hieros. Patr. 136 (from S.Savas monastery), fourteenth century
16. Cod. 2482.6 National Library of Greece, ff. 27-39, first half of the fourteenth century

    Λίνου Πολίτη, *Κατάλογος Χειρογράφων Εθνικής Βιβλιοθήκης, Πραγματείαι,* Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 1991, *χγφ. υπ΄ αριθμόν 1857-2500*

17. Cod. Vat. gr. 1587, ff. 42v-56v, fourteenth century

    lacuna τὰναντία γὰρ ad vv. αἱ συνεπόμεναι, [PG 1457 A line1- 1457 B line 15 and 1461 B line 12-1489 D line 3]

18. Cod. Vat. gr. 864, ff. 356-380, fourteenth century
19. Cod. Ambros. gr. 695, ff.420v-426, fifteenth century
20. Cod. Vat. Suppl. gr. 1031, ff. 98v-121v, fifteenth century
21. Constamonitou Monastery, Mt.Athos, Cod. 450.14 (18), paper, fifteenth c.
22. Cod. Bodl. Barocc. XL, ff. 323-344, sixteenth century
23. Dionysiou Monastery, Mt.Athos, Cod. 3651.117 (3), paper, sixteenth century
24. Vatopedi Monastery, Mt.Athos, Cod. 86 (2), ff.46a-78a, sixteenth century
25. Κώδικας I.M. Βαρλαάμ Μετεώρων 138 (αρ.22), ff. 292α-306α, sixteenth century
26. **Κώδικας I.M. Μεταμορφώσεως Μετεώρων 366 (αρ.67), ff.315α-326β,** sixteenth century

27. Cod. Marc. gr. II 53, coll. 1165 Olim Nanianus LXXIV,
ff.176v-181, sixteenth century (Venice)
28. Cod. Marc. gr. II 63, coll. 1343 Olim Nanianus LXXXIV,
ff. 182v-200v, sixteenth century (Venice)
29. Cod. 47, Handelsschule, Chalki, a.1608-9
The MSS. of the Patriarchal School of Chalki are now kept in the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople (Istanbul).
30. Protaton, Mt.Athos, Cod. 312 [85], ff.253-286v, seventeenth century (1638-9)
31. Panteleimon Monastery, Mt.Athos, Cod. 6703 (9), paper 0.29X0.195, 760 pp., homily in pp.190-223, seventeenth century
32. Xeropotamou Monastery, Mt.Athos, Cod. 2589, 256 (30), "Ανθολογία μερικὴ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων Κωνσταντίνου Δαπόντε, τοῦ μετονομαζομένου Καισαρίου" paper, eighteenth century

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